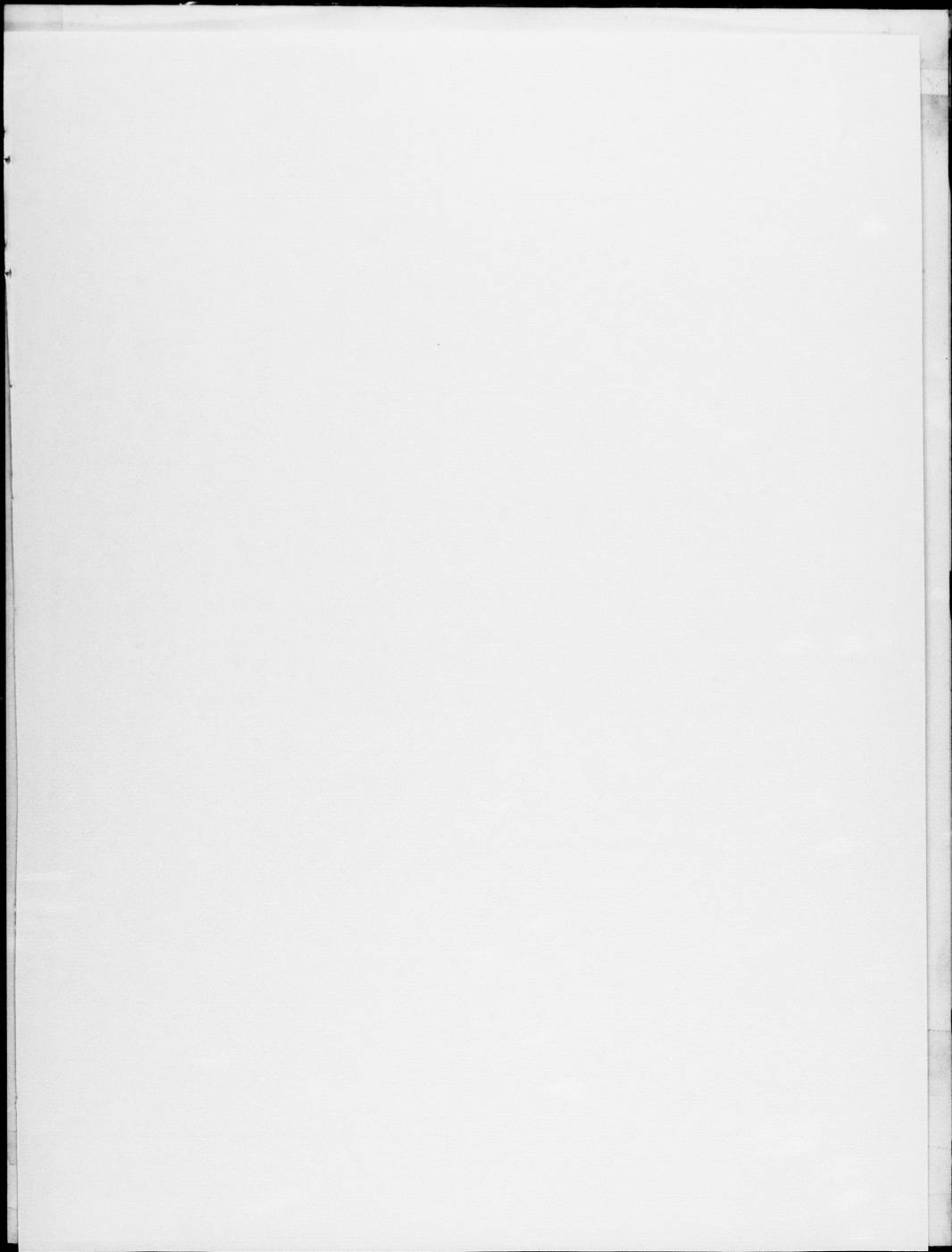


- V. A Comparison of Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son with the Conduct Books of the Sixteenth Century, by Edna P. Loomis. Unpublished thesis, submitted by Edna P. Loomis, in partial fulfillment for the Master of Arts Degree in English, The Pennsylvania State College, 1932.





# THESIS

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE COLLEGE.

A COMPARISON OF LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS TO HIS SON  
with the  
CONDUCT BOOKS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

by  
EDNA P. LOOMIS.

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL REQUIREMENT  
for the  
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By \_\_\_\_\_

Professor of \_\_\_\_\_.

A little over one hundred fifty years ago, the private letters of a father to his son were ruthlessly published, thus exposing to the public eye the undisguised nature of the writer and the continuous paternal advice to the boy for thirty-one years. Curiously enough, the book is valued as a guide in many ways to the youth today and, from the literary point of view, as one of the best epistolary productions. This group of letters, Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, is usually present in a well chosen library and is not only highly praised but also greatly condemned. It is a product partly of the age in which Lord Chesterfield lived and of the ideals he formed by reading and observation. A study of the contents of these letters and a comparison between them and the sixteenth century "handbooks" or guides for courtiers furnish the material for this treatise. These books viewed from the twentieth century when the characteristics and the tendencies of both periods may be seen in perspective, have shown many similarities and differences although a rather consistent corpus of rules for the training of gentlemen seems to have been common to all.

Chesterfield's Letters to his Son is compared with the conduct books of the sixteenth century. By conduct book is meant a



book containing advice, suggestions, precepts, ideals, or schedules for the intellectual, moral, physical, and social training of a gentleman or courtier.

To appreciate a comparison between a book written in the eighteenth century and books written in the sixteenth century, a person may need to review the conditions and characteristics prevailing in these two periods.

The first half of the eighteenth century is characterized by rapid social development. In the first two decades nearly two thousand public coffee houses sprang up in London, and many private clubs took form. This social life greatly influenced the polishing of men's words and manners. However, the typical Londoner was rude and vulgar in his tastes; the streets at night were infested with rowdies and "Mohawks"; all kinds of lawlessness prevailed. Philosophic thought concerned itself with non-constructive criticism. During the first half of the century, religious emotion was apparently dead or dying; art was mediocre; prose literature flourished; poetry declined. The majority of representative society were indifferent and indolent, carelessly submitting to prevailing pleasures offered. There were, of course, a few satirical dissatisfied people like Swift, Lady Mary Montague, Lord Hervey, and Sir Horace Walpole who refused to submit and accept graciously what was prevalent. The lack of intellectual or moral growth occasioned little discomfort. Conditions were recognized, but the apparent results unavoided. Very few had learned the meaning



of "shocking"; vivacious court ladies had a code of ethics which allowed them to be immoral without fear of exposure or shame. It is not until the end of the period that signs of any improvement are noticeable, and then it is a change to the extreme--a change from "boorish behavior" to "stilted politeness". George I, George II, and Queen Caroline highly valued common-sense and agreeable manners; yet the gallantry of the time directly opposed both virtues.

Travellers abroad noted the absence of culture in English manners. There were, however, many instances of English gentlemen and ladies distinguished for their graceful carriage, choice language, exact diction because "to be elegant and to have good form was a man's first duty."

The period is known as the Classic Age, the Pseudo-Classic Age, the Augustan Age, and the Age of Queen Anne. There is a revival of classicism in the effort to have literature conform to rules established by great writers of other nations. The creative power of the Elizabethans is absent, and the writing develops into an elegant formalism in keeping with the elaborate social code then prevalent. It is an age of prose. The education of the gentleman was considered important. His education was usually under the supervision of a tutor, supplemented by attendance at one of the universities and foreign travel for a year or so. At court card-playing (quadrille, whist), for the time being displaced reading and intelligent conversation, but it aided in uniting the sexes. George II hated books.

1. Social England, vol. III.

The eighteenth century, then was one experiencing a rapid social development. Under the influence of coffee houses, and the revival of interest in learning, prose distinguished by elegant formalism in keeping with an elaborate social code prevailed.

The sixteenth century is characterized by intellectual liberty, social contentment, unbounded patriotism, and enthusiasm. England was at peace; discoveries and explorations awakened ambitions, hopes, imaginations; Elizabeth's policies quieted for the time much religious bigotry and hatred; foreign literature was quickening the spirits of English writers. During the entire century, England was exceedingly sensitive to foreign influence: one foreign treatise or another was constantly inspiring Elizabethan writers. Castiglione and Guevara, Montemayor, and Mendoza, each in his own way, exerted his influence, which was impelling and directive. But the English writer of the sixteenth century was ready to express himself originally and naturally. The foreign influence only stimulated him to action, for the concept was quite his own. The age was primarily an age of poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The period is known as the English Renaissance or the Age of Elizabeth. The court was easily the supreme element in the national life. Elizabeth's insatiable love of pleasure, her constant high spirits, and her enthusiasm and interest in enjoying life, made gaiety and light-heartedness prevail; for her court was gay and light-hearted, and her court was everywhere, since she traveled here and there in the country to "be known and seen of all men."

1. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III.

She was practical in many things, especially in politics and in religion. Her age reflects this fact. She admired practical wisdom, and if honest in nothing else, she was honest in her frank worldly-mindedness. She and her followers made profit and pleasure the main objectives in life and sought them openly and truthfully. The Queen's gay, pleasure-seeking temperament was innately coarse; naturally Elizabethan society was coarse also. Coarse manners often express coarser morals. As Elizabeth was fond of magnificence and display, she never appeared in public without a splendid band of followers. Her group of "gentlemen pensioners" consisted of all the young men of the noblest families in England.<sup>1</sup> The court was a scene of wild adventures, and every young man who could gain admission there hoped to gain the Queen's notice and secure his own fortune.

Spencer describes the courtier's position with vigorous bitterness of feeling:

'Full little knowest thou, that hast not tride  
 What hell it is in suing long to bide;  
 To lose good days, that might be better spent;  
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent;  
 To spend to-day, to be put back to-morrow;  
 To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;  
 To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;  
 To eate thy hearte through comfortlesse despaires:

1. Social England, vol. III, pp 383 ff.

To fawne, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to runne  
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone."<sup>1</sup>

One great aim of contemporary writers became that of supplying the needs of the courtier, just as, in Rome, it was the orator, the typical figure of the classical age, who had won similar notice. A series of moral treatises, in narrative form, first appeared. Their purpose, for the most part, was courtly education, and up to about 1584, instruction in an attractive form, became the chief concern of a group of writers, of whom Lyly was chief. Then the work became one of a more cheerful nature. Green and Lodge wrote romances for court entertainment, while Sidney furnished delight in the "quiet shades of Arcadia". Masques, interludes, and dramas provided the formal and often elaborate entertainments. Hunting with hounds, and hawking were as popular with the aristocracy as ever; the gun was beginning to oust the bow.<sup>2</sup>

The sixteenth century is thus known as a century marked by intellectual liberty, social contentment, unbounded patriotism, and enthusiasm. It is a period of great creative power and is an age of poetry.

The sixteenth century displayed a great interest in what have been termed conduct books.<sup>3</sup> Some originated in foreign sources;

1. Age of Elizabeth, pp 140 ff.

2. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III, pp 387 ff.

3. Il Principe (1513) by Niccolò Machiavelli, translated in English under the title The Prince; The Boke Named the Governour (1531) by Thomas Elyot; Il Cortegiano (1528) by Baldassare Castiglione, translated under the title The Courtier (1561) by Thomas Hoby; The Scholemaster (1570) by Roger Ascham; Queen Elizabeth's Academy (1572) by Sir Humphrey Gilbert; The Mirrour of Good Maners, compiled in Latin by Dominic Mancini and translated (1570) into English by (Continued on p 7.)



some were adaptations; while others were of wholly English origin. The following pages contain a brief summary of these books so that comparison with Chesterfield's Letters to his Son may be made.

Il Principe was written while Machiavelli was living in retirement near San Casciano. Machiavelli wrote Il Principe to Lorenzo, son of Piero de Medici Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, with the hope that the presentation of it to Guiliamo de Medici at Florence might effect his return to ease and political influence. The book is the famous text-book of Machiavelian policy.<sup>1</sup> It is chiefly devoted to the character which must be possessed by the prince who has become the ruler of a state, by conquest, election, or hereditary right, and wishes to retain his power. Towards the close of the work he discusses the question "Whether Princes should be faithful to their Engagements?" and decides they should not be so, unless this course be for their interest; hence, the "Machiavelian policy." Schelling states the "Renaissance stimulated the frank, philosophical cynicism of Machiavelli's Prince."<sup>2</sup>

The Boke, Named the Governour is the first book on the subject of education written and printed in the English language,<sup>3</sup> and the "first to bring the Renaissance spirit to the application of the English language. It is a compendium of the education which those who are destined to govern ought to receive. Elyot maps out

3 (Cont'd.) Alexander Barclay; Certain Eplogs of Alexander Barclay (1570); Il Galateo (1545) by Monsignor Giovanni de la Casa, translated under the title The Refined Courtier (1576) by Peterson; Euphuus: The Anatomy of Wit (1578) by John Lyly; Euphuus and His England (1580) by John Lyly; and Arcadia (1590) by Sir Philip Sidney.

1. Il Principe, Introduction.

2. English Literature During the Time of Shakespeare, p 4.

3. The Boke, Named the Governour, Intro. p 11.



what constitutes a thorough education of a gentleman fit to rule. He commences with the birth of the youth and follows his education and training carefully and minutely until the lad has become a mature gentleman."<sup>1</sup> Up to the age of seven the child is to be under the charge of a nurse or governess. He is then to be handed over to a tutor or a carefully selected master, and taught music and its uses, painting, and carving, and is to be instructed in letters from such books as Aesop's Fables, 'quick and merrie dialogues' like those of Lucian, or the heroic poems of Homer. When he attains the age of fourteen, he is to be taught logic, cosmography, and 'histories' and although 'this age be not equal to antiquity' (the Classics), he is, nevertheless, to make a beginning therein. His bodily frame is to be exercised in wrestling, hunting, swimming, and, above all, in dancing, which profits much for the acquirement of moral virtues. Shooting with the cross bow is also to be practised and tennis, if not indulged in too frequently and if limited to brief periods of exercise, but football is to be 'put in perpetual silence' because 'therein is nothing but beastly fury and external violence, whereof proceedeth hurt, and consequently rancour and malice do remaine with them that be wounded.' In his second and third books he sets forth the lofty ideals which ought to inspire the governour and describes the way in which he can be trained to a virtuous life.

The whole book is full of classical reminiscences taken either directly from the authors of antiquity or borrowed from the humanists

1. The Booke Named the Governour, Intro. p 13.

of Italy. It discourses on the methods of hunting practised among the Greeks and Romans, and the dances of the youths of Sparta are not forgotten. It is also interesting to notice that the education portrayed in the first book is almost exactly what had been given to the young Italian patrician for more than a generation; while the second and third books add those moral ideals which the more seriously-minded northern nations demanded. It is the unfolding of a plan of education which Willibald Pirckheimer, the friend of Erasmus, describes as having been his own, and it is the attempt to introduce into English life an ideal of the many sided culture which the classical renaissance had disclosed."<sup>1</sup>

Il Cortegiano was begun probably about 1514, but was not published until 1528. The dialogs that compose the book are feigned to have occurred in the winter of 1506-7. At that time the author was in England, an envoy from the Duke of Urbino to Henry VII. The dialogs present the qualities, personality, and characteristics of an ideal courtier. "It is, of course, much more than a treatise on the up-bringing of youth, but, as presenting a picture of the 'perfect man' of the renaissance, it had an undoubted, if indirect, effect on higher education in England. Il Cortegiano speedily became cosmopolitan in its vogue. High society in France, Spain, and the Low Countries not less than in Italy, revered it as an inspired guide, supplementing, according to choice, its obvious omissions with respect to the side of religion and the stalwart virtues. The concept of a complete personality constituted of physical gifts,

1. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III, pp 23 f.

learning, taste, and grace of manner was the gift which the Italian revival at its noblest offered to the western peoples."<sup>1</sup> Schelling states of this book as of Il Principe that "when Renaissance reached deeper, it raised ideals of the perfect man living in society as depicted in The Courtier."<sup>2</sup>

The Scholemaster, written by one of Queen Elizabeth's former tutors, Roger Ascham, is a plea for a more lenient treatment of the school boy. He denounces harsh punishments, pleads for the boy with a slow but solid mind, condemns travel as a means of education as detrimental to morals, and recommends the study and imitation of the classical style. He quotes from Plato the "evidences" of a good wit; such as, industry, interest, curiosity, a good will. He deploras sending a youth to court at seventeen to be left without a career and to form idle and vicious habits. He advises study and application for every young Englishman, proud of his England.

Queen Elizabeth's Achademy, Gilbert's "scheme of a training in which language, modern no less than ancient, mathematics and law, are grouped with technical and military exercises," is an attempt to bring education into immediate touch with actual life. In essence, it is a protest against the narrow humanism of the public school, the herald of a reaction which was to take one shape in Bacon, and another in Montaigne."<sup>3</sup>

The Mirroir of Good Maners contains treatises on a number of

1. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III, pp 496 ff.
2. English Literature During the Lifetime of Shakespeare, p 4.
3. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III, p 497.

the cardinal virtues. It furnishes a guide in deportment for a courtier.

Certain Ecloges of Alexander Barclay also contains treatises on virtues and qualities desirable for courtiers and all princes in general.

Il Galateo or A Treatise on Politeness and Delicacy of Manners is a "frank handbook of manners, a manual for the school-boy and the parvenu, and became popular in England under the titles of Refined Courtier and the like, given to it by later editors and adapters".<sup>1</sup> Its purpose is aptly stated in the preface: "As you are now just entering upon the journey of life, which I, as you see, have already in a great measure performed, I determined with myself, from the sincere affection which I bear you, to point out some few dangerous parts of the road."<sup>2</sup> Critics have pronounced this treatise in its usefulness in regulating the manners of youth 'to be worth its weight in gold.' The title, Il Galateo, is in compliment to an old courtier of that name, distinguished by his wit, learning, and politeness in the palace of John Matthew Gilbert, bishop of Verona.<sup>3</sup> The book contains no plot; it is merely a series of discourses. On the title page of the edition of Baltimore, 1811, is the following quotation from Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son.

"To do the honour of a table gracefully, is one of the outlines of a well-bred man; and to carve well, little as it may seem,

1. Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. III, p 497.

2. Il Galateo, Introduction, p 15.

3. Galateo, Preface.



is useful twice every day, and the doing of which ill, is not only troublesome to ourselves, but renders us disagreeable and ridiculous to others." Of course this quotation is found only on the editions printed since Chesterfield's time, but it points to a similarity in purpose in both *Casa* and *Chesterfield*.

Euphues is an extensive moral treatise. The Anatomy of Wit is a philosophical essay. Euphues and His England, also a philosophical essay, is "less satirical and more interested in the refinement of choice society, more concerned with the intricacies of polite love making and the repartee of smart conversation among gentlemen and gentlewomen. .... It is the earliest piece of English fiction--with Euphues commences in England the literature of the drawing room."<sup>1</sup> The skill in which Lyly introduces his moral teachings and weaves a plot may be seen in the following synopses of the two works. In The Anatomy of Wit, Euphues, a young gentleman of Athens went to Naples where he became an intimate friend to Philantus. Euphues is infatuated with Lucilla, the betrothed to Philantus and succeeds in winning her love and by so doing destroys the friendship of Philantus. Later, one Curio wins her from Euphues. Then Euphues and Philantus renew friendship and Euphues returns to Athens promising to write to Philantus. He does, and in his letters gives advice as to wise conduct and avoidance of women and love. Most noted epistle is "A cooling card for Philantus and all Fond Lovers."<sup>2</sup>

1. English Literature During the Lifetime of Shakespeare, pp 35 f.  
2. Euphues.



In Euphues and His England Euphues and Philantus go to England to become acquainted with court life. A long tedious voyage is ended at Dover in a visit with Fidus, a keeper of bees, who relates his life's story, his love and romance and tragedy. Fidus spends his days learning wisdom from his bees. Philantus and Euphues attend court, meet fair women. Philantus loves Camilla who loves Sario. Philantus is again estranged from Euphues because of his (Philantus) loves. Lady Flavia causes Philantus to woo Frances (the Violet). Euphues returns to Italy. Philantus marries.<sup>1</sup>

Arcadia is a pastoral romance interspersed with eclogues which portray the delights of rural life. It is dedicated to Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke. Sidney, regarded by his contemporaries as the flower of chivalry, reflects the qualities of refined nobility and gentlemanliness in this volume, Arcadia.

1. Euphues.

Lord Chesterfield, the son of Philip Stanhope, the third Earl of Chesterfield, and Elizabeth Saville, daughter of the Marquis of Halifax, was born in London in 1694. He attended Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and traveled one year on the continent. In 1715 he entered Parliament remaining as a member of the House of Commons for eleven years. In 1732, he was sent as Ambassador to the Hague, and in 1733, having become Earl of Chesterfield in 1726, he returned to England and took an active part in the debates in the House of Lords. Again, in 1744, he was sent to the Hague and later in the year was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. In this capacity, he showed a great degree of political ability and eminently distinguished himself. In 1746, he became instrumental in the reformation of the calendar and in the recognition of the New Style. He died March 24, 1773. A more intimate account of Chesterfield as given by him in one of his letters (Letter CCLXI) is as follows:

"When I first came into the world, it was at the age you are of now, so that, by the way, you have got the start of me in that important article by two or three years at least. At nineteen, I left the University of Cambridge, where I was an absolute pendant; when I talked my best, I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentle-

man, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not without thoughts of wearing the toga virilis of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns. With these excellent notions, I went first to the Hague, where, by the help of several letters of recommendation, I was soon introduced into all the best company; and where I very soon discovered that I was totally mistaken in almost every one notion I had entertained. Fortunately, I had a strong desire to please (the mixed result of good nature, and a vanity by no means blameable) and was sensible that I had nothing but the desire. I therefore, resolved, if possible, to acquire the means, too. I studied attentively and minutely the dress, the air, the manner, the address, and the turn of conversation of all those whom I found to be the people in fashion, and most generally allowed to please. I imitated them as well as I could; if I heard that one man was reckoned remarkably genteel, I carefully watched his dress, motions and attitudes, and formed my own upon them. When I heard of another, whose conversation was agreeable and engaging, I listened and attended to the turn of it. I addressed myself, though de tres mauvaies grace, to all the most fashionable fine ladies; confessed and laughed with them at my own awkwardness and rawness, recommending myself as an object for them to try their skill in forming. By these means, and with a passionate desire of pleasing every body, I came by degrees to please some; and, I can assure you, that what little figure I have made in the

world, has been much more owing to that passionate desire of pleasing universally than to any intrinsic merit or sound knowledge I might ever have been master of. My passion for pleasing was so strong that I own to you fairly, I wished to make every woman I saw in love with me, and every man I met with, admire me."<sup>1</sup>

"Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son form an important volume amongst English classics. The grace of his style, the brilliancy of his wit, the acuteness of his observation, the ability of his satire must gain for the author the admiration of all those who indulge in the pleasure of reading his work before proceeding to pass judgment on it. In the Letters, we have exposed to our view all the weakness of that artificial state of Society with which Chesterfield was himself environed. He lived among those who would have deceived him, and he became himself a master in the art of dissimulation. He adapted himself to his environment. With the immorality and the baseness around him he did not concern himself except to consider how he could best turn it to his own advantage. We may accept him as a type of the average courtier of his time with, how ver, much more ability than was possessed by the majority of his contemporaries, and endowed with a more than ordinary power of controlling his vices, a qualification which seems to have obtained for him merely the general condemnation of heartlessness. .... He lived amongst human beings degenerated, in the absence of correcting force, into preyers on their kind--among poli-

1. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, Letter CCLXI.

ticians who enriched themselves at the expense of the country-- amongst noble ladies who enriched themselves at the expense of virtue--amongst divines who, adding to the vices of the courtier that of hypocrisy, enriched themselves at the expense of men's belief in the sacred truths which they mocked by lives of callous indifference to every Christian precept which was not coincident with the study of their own temporal interest. In such an atmosphere Chesterfield spent most of his life. He accepted human nature as it presented itself to him. .... What is to this age the immorality of Chesterfield, was merely the polite gallantry of those among whom he lived. His dissimulation is merely the record of his observation of the manner in which his acquaintances conducted themselves one with another; and his abstaining from the inculcation of those religious truths may be regarded as due to the nausea excited by the debasement of truths mouthed by such professional teachers of them as he met. It is a pity that he was no better; but that he was so much a man is a matter for congratulation."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son consists of three hundred twenty-two letters covering a correspondence of twenty-nine years, from 1737 to 1768. This series of letters commenced when the son, Philip Stanhope, was five years of age and continued until the son's death in 1768. They were written through out the concluding half of Lord Chesterfield's life when his most serious interest was the education and advancement in life of this, his only child. Practically every letter reveals the fact that the

1. Letters to His Son, Preface by W. W. Givvings, London, 1890.



boy and his welfare are the major interest of the father. In Letter CXXXIV, Chesterfield states his great objective, "My object is to have you fit to live; which, if you are not, I do not desire that you should live at all;"<sup>1</sup> in Letter CIX, he writes his fundamental desire, "I ask nothing of you but what is entirely in your own power; to be an honest, a learned, and a well-bred man. As for the first, I cannot, I will not doubt it; I think you know already the infamy; the horrors, and the misfortunes that always attend a dishonest and dishonorable man. .... Common sense points out civility, and observation teaches you the manner of it, which makes it good-breeding;"<sup>2</sup> in Letter CXII, he gives the purpose of his advice and correspondence, "Do not think that I mean to dictate as a parent; I only mean to advise as a friend, and an indulgent one, too, and do not apprehend that I mean to check your pleasures, of which, on the contrary, I only desire to be the guide, not the censor. Let my experience supply your want of it, and clear your way, in the progress of your youth of those thorns and briers which scratched and disfigured me in the course of mine;"<sup>3</sup> in Letter CL, "to unite in you all the knowledge of a scholar with the manners of a courtier; and to join, what is seldom joined by any of my countrymen, books and the world. .... You will always take care to keep the best company in the place where you are, which is the only use of traveling; and the pleasures of a gentleman are only to be found in the best company; for that riot which low company, most

1. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, Letter CXXXIV, p 136.

2. op. cit., Letter CIX, p 105.

3. op. cit., Letter CXII, pp 108 f.

falsely and impudently call pleasure, is only the sensuality of a swine;"<sup>1</sup> in Letter CCLXXIX, "From my original plan for your education, I meant to make you un homme universal;"<sup>2</sup> and in Letter CCXC, "I had two views in your education. .... Those two were parliamentary and foreign affairs. In consequence of those views, I took care, first, to give you a sufficient stock of sound learning, and next, an early knowledge of the world."<sup>3</sup> Thus the Letters are the embodiment of Lord Chesterfield's cherished hopes and ambitions. As mentioned previously in the biography of Chesterfield, he was conversant with the court life and conduct of a gentleman and knew the traits and characteristics most coveted and desirable.

Much has been written and said by critics and laymen about the moral and ethical tone of the Letters. One of the most widely known criticisms is Dr. Johnson's, "They teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master."<sup>4</sup> This criticism, however, one must remember is by one who harbored a personal ill feeling toward the writer. Frances Burney says of the Letters, "They are well written; but were written with a tendency to make his son a man wholly unprincipled, inculcating immorality, countenancing all gentleman-like vices, advising deceit and exhorting to inconstancy."<sup>5</sup> James O'Donnell Bennett writes, "It defines and recommends principles of conduct which would have made his son a truckler and a fawner. For a century and a half it has been steadily read

1. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, Lett r CL, p 159.

2. op. cit., Letter CCLXXIX, p 446.

3. op. cit., Letter CCXC, pp 468.

4. Life of Johnson, Boswell, vol. 1, pp 307 f.

5. Early Diary, ed. Ellis, vol. 1, p 305.

and vigorously denounced and praised. It remains the most profitable and the most perilous book that a father who would have his boy make a pleasing figure in the world can put into his hands."<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oliphant in an article in Blackwood's states, "It is evident that Chesterfield meant no particular harm, that he was only recommending to his boy such conduct as became a young man of spirit, and would be to his credit and advantage. The same letters which convey also the best of advice, show the evidence of the tenderest anxiety. The glimpse herein afforded of the corruption of society is appalling."<sup>2</sup>

Craig in Life of Chesterfield makes the observation. "The Letters were written for a special person, and with a special purpose. .... It is not fair to describe them as that which they were never intended to be--a code of morality. They form simply an elementary textbook of diplomacy, and the moral questions are collateral issues. .... It is not too much to say there never was a period in which the morality of all professions stood lower than the early Georgian. .... If Chesterfield recommended the practice of gallantry to his son, he was merely advocating conformity with the object of encouraging vicious indulgence, but as the only means of acquiring those graces and that social influence which intercourse with a society could alone bestow."<sup>3</sup> Dobson in Eighteenth Century Vignettes offers a charitable viewpoint, "....those to

1. Much Loved Books, Review of Letters.

2. Blackwood's Magazine, vol. CIII, May 1868, p 516.

3. Life of Chesterfield, p 285.

whom their note of worldly wisdom is distasteful must blame not so much the writer, as Horace and Cicero, Bolingbroke and La Bruyere De Retz and La Rochefoucault, from whom he had compiled his rules for conduct, and shaped his scheme of life."<sup>1</sup> Sir E. E. Grant-Duff admits the Letters contain a number of coarse expressions and allusions and that many passages inculcate a most detestable morality, yet he says, "I think they ought to be a regular portion of the education of every Englishman who is likely to enter public life tolerable early."<sup>2</sup> Finally, in the preface to the edition of the Letters is an acknowledgment by the editor that the letters have incurred strong reprehension on two grounds; namely, (1) Some of their maxims are repugnant to good morals; (2) Chesterfield insists too much on manners and graces instead of more solid acquirements."<sup>3</sup>

The preceding excerpts make quite clear the fact that the Letters furnished advice and teaching in keeping with the social life of the century and that the letters were written not for a moral code to be widely disseminated but for the guidance of a Gentleman of the eighteenth century, the guidance of his son.

The Letters consist of timely instructions, suggestions, advice, and personal interest for the physical, mental, moral, and social development of the son to enable him to be "as near perfection as possible." "Never were so much pains taken for any body's education as for yours; and never had any body those op-

1. Eighteenth Century Vignettes, p 151.

2. Fortnightly Review, June, 1879.

3. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, Preface p XVIII.



portunities of knowledge and improvement which you have had and still have."<sup>1</sup>

The Letters were written by one whose youth was spent in the study, meditation, and imitation of the classics. "If not a very profound scholar, he (Chesterfield) was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the classic authors, and was upon the whole a judicious critic."<sup>2</sup> Hence, naturally, the Letters have a somewhat similar development as have many of the conduct books. In both, emphasis is laid upon those qualities and accomplishments that will fit a youth for court life; in both, detailed instructions, admonitions, warnings, allusions, illustrations abound.....There is, however, a great difference in style and diction between the Letters and the conduct books. Chesterfield's style "is the finished expression not of rhetorical culture, but of the culture by which all that constitutes character is marked....absolutely unaffected, simple, original, and without mannerisms of any kind, it is a style which no mechanical skill can copy. .... In two respects the diction of Chesterfield is especially noted--in its exquisite finish, and in its scrupulous purity. It is the perfection of epistolary style, flexibly adapting itself to what is supposed or suggested--now heated, pointed, epigrammatic; now gracefully diffuse, now rising to dignity; but always natural and always easy."<sup>3</sup> "His style eschews all unnecessary verbiage. .... But it was to his mastery of this art of condensation that he owes

1. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 144, Letter CXLII.

2. Life of Chesterfield, p 82.

3. op. cit., 343.

the undisputed position of being one of the finest epigrammatists that ever lived."<sup>1</sup>

The prose of the early sixteenth century is closely modelled on classic prose. Later in the century, the prose is ornate. Rhetorical devices are resorted to, developing a poetic, highly artificial style called Euphuistic, the source of which was John Lyly's Euphues. The prominence of poetry in the Elizabethan Age also tends to make the prose of that period artistic.

A conception of what the character and accomplishments of the ideal courtier were, may be formed from the subjoined quotations: "To fill his place in the hierarchy of this world, he must be better born and better educated, have better manners, wear better clothes, and wear them more gracefully, live in a larger and more beautiful house, find recreation in more refined and more taxing amusements, look to his morals more closely, cherishing above all things a fine sense of honor,—in short, never forget his essential superiority to the rabble."<sup>2</sup> Nature in every thing hath deeply sowed that privy seed, which giveth a certain force and property of her beginning unto whatsoever springeth of it, and maketh it like unot herself. As we see by example, not only in the race of horses and other beasts, but also in trees whose slips are grafts always for the most part are like unto the stock of the tree they came from; and if at any time, they grow out of kind, the fault is in the husbandman. And the like is in men, if they be

1. Life of Chesterfield, P 349.

2. The Doctrine of the English Gentleman, p 13 f.

trained up in good nurture, most commonly they resemble them from whom they come, and oftentimes pass them."<sup>1</sup>

"....'lyke as the rose in beauty passeth al other flowers and is an ornament and setting forth of the place wher it groweth and so by the excellencye that nature hath given, it leadeth a man's eye soner to the aspeete and beholding of it then of other flowers, so ought a gentleman by hys conditions, qualities, and good behavior, to excell all other sortes of men, and by that his excellencye to set forth and adorne the whole company among whom he shall happen for to be; and therby to leade the eye of man's affection to love him before others for hys vertues sake."<sup>2</sup> "Fit to serve in war, he has the virtues and qualities of the soldier, --courage, endurance, patience, generosity toward friend and foe, foresight, adaptability, knowledge of military science.--....He prefers peace to war. Fit also to serve in peace, he has the virtues of peace,--justice, liberality, courtesy, prudence, the knowledge how to govern himself and others. He is more than a soldier in that he has the ability and training to administer the laws and serve in any public capacity in which his prince may employ him; he is less than a scholar in that he values learning not for its own sake but for its usefulness. As a courtier he covers the soldiers' brute strength and roughness and the scholar's aloofness and awkwardness with a grace of speech and action, a mastery of himself in every situation that may arise, and interest in every aspect of life, a readiness of wit and fund of general knowledge

1. The Courtier, p 22.

2. The Doctrine of the English Gentleman, p 38 f. The Institution of a Gentleman, London, 1555.

that make of him good company. He is the ornament as well as the prop of states, and is himself the one best argument for an aristocracy."<sup>1</sup>

"....fashioned so wise and good, he shall be most wise, most continent, most temperate, most manly, and most just, full of liberality, majesty, holiness, and mercy. Finally, he shall be most glorious, and most dearly beloved both to God and man, through whose grace he shall attain to that heroical and noble virtue that shall make him pass the bounds of the nature of man, and shall rather be called a demigod than a man mortal."<sup>2</sup>

"Only good men by their government and example make happy times in every degree and state' Thus Ascham summed up the driving force behind the whole effort of sixteenth century Englishmen to frame a gentleman. The essence of the gentleman was goodness; without goodness he could not perform his office in the state which was first of all to govern well, and secondly by his example of personal perfection to make all men good."<sup>3</sup>

In this conception of the courtier, Ascham is voicing Castiglione's idea that the prince must never incline to any vicious matter but ever strive to attain goodness, a greatness of soul and character, a ready courage, a familiar, gentle behavior and by his loving kindness and superior cast to be an inspiration and ideal to strangers and subjects.<sup>4</sup> The renaissance conception of a gentleman was also partly created by the knightly ideal of the

1. The Doctrine of the English Gentleman, p 163.

2. The Courtier, p 308.

3. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 70.

4. The Courtier, pp 323 f.



middle ages. In Julian Berners' Book of St. Albans are found listed the virtues of these knights. These include his duties to God--reverence, gratitude, faithfulness; his duties to his sovereign--obedience and fear of offending; his duty to his country in time of war--readiness to engage in a just quarrel, wisdom in conflict, bravery, courteous treatment of prisoners; his duty in time of peace--charity, chivalry, justice, hospitality; his duty to himself and associates--cleanliness, temperance, courtesy, purity in thought, word, and deed, honor.<sup>1</sup>

The sixteenth century favored the active against the contemplative life; the ideal service was in public office striving for the common rather than private good and for the preservation of the state and the welfare of its constituents.<sup>2</sup>

The content of Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son will be compared with the content of the conduct books previously mentioned, under the following heads: education; character, manners; accomplishments; and pleasures.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, learning was considered not only useless but harmful in that it reduced the valor of a man by making him effeminate and fearful and more inclined to enjoy the ease of the study than to endure the hardships of camp.<sup>3</sup> Machiavelli in Il Principe definitely states the importance of military preparedness, "A prince, then, is to have no other design, nor thought, nor study but war and the arts and disciplines

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, pp 70 f.

2. op. cit., p 59.

3. op. cit., p 112.

of it; for, indeed, that is the only profession worthy of a prince .....the principal thing which deprives or gains a man authority is the neglect or profession of arms. .... when you are ignorant in war, it makes you contemptible which is a scandal. ....a prince unacquainted with the discipline of war, besides other infelicities to which he is exposed, cannot be beloved by, nor confident in, his armies. He never, therefore, ought to relax his thoughts from the exercises of war not so much as in time of peace."<sup>1</sup> Again, "Exercise of the mind, a prince is to do that by diligence in history and solemn consideration of the actions of the most excellent men, by observing how they demeaned themselves in the wars, examining the grounds and reasons of their victories and losses, that he may be able to avoid the one and imitate the other; and above all, to keep close to the example of some great captain of old, and not only to make him his pattern, but to have all his actions perpetually in his mind."<sup>2</sup> This narrow, limited view became modified when the English began to grasp the possibilities of a better governance which the Renaissance presented to them.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning instruction, Elyot says, "'Seneca sayeth we instructe our children in liberall sciences, not because they prepare the mynde and make it apte to receive vertue. Which beinge considered, no man will denye but that they may be necessary to every man that coveteth very nobilitie; whiche as I have often tymes said is in the havynge and use of vertue. And verily in

1. *The Prince*, p 92.

2. *op. cit.*, p 96.

3. *Doctrine of English Gentleman*, p 121

whom doctrine hath been so founden joyned with vertue, there vertue hath sowed excellent and as I mought saye triumphant."<sup>1</sup> And in his introduction to The Boke Named the Governour, he makes this very broad statement, "No education is too good or too great for the Governours of today--viz. for the community at large."<sup>2</sup> In the eighteenth century Chesterfield admonishes his son to obtain solid knowledge for it "is the first and great foundation of your future fortune and character,"<sup>3</sup> and "From the time that you have had life, it has been the principal and favorite object of mine to make you as perfect as the imperfections of human nature will allow; in this view, I have grudged no pains nor expense in your education; convinced that education, more than nature, is the cause of that great difference which you see in the characters of men. While you were a child, I endeavored to form your heart habitually to virtue and honor, before your understanding was capable of showing you their beauty and utility. Those principles, which you then got, like your grammar rules, only by rote, are now, I am persuaded, fixed and confirmed by reason."<sup>4</sup> Castiglione advocates the courtier possess knowledge and wisdom, "That, therefore, which is the principal matter and necessary for a Courtier to speak and write well, I believe, is knowledge. For he that hath not knowledge and the thing in his mind that deserveth to be understood, can neither speak nor write it. Then must he couch in a good order that he hath to speak or to write, and afterward express it well

1. *Doctrine of English Gentleman*, p 120, *The Boke Named the Governour*, bk. III, ch. XXIV, p 278.

2. *The Boke Named the Governour*, Intro, p 17.

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3. Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*, p 167, Letter XLV.

4. *op. cit.*, p 266, Letter CC.

with words: the which if I be not deceived, ought to be apt, chosen, clear, and well applied, and, above all, in use also among the people."<sup>1</sup> "Therefore, it behooveth our Courtier in all his doings to be chary and heedful, and whatso he saith or doeth to accompany it with wisdom, and not only to set his delight to have in himself parts and excellent qualities, but also to order the tenor of his life after such a trade that the whole may be answerable unto these parts, and see the selfsame to be always and in everything such that it make one body of all these good qualities."<sup>2</sup>

The Mirrour of Good Maners also favors knowledge and reason,

"Reason also moveth man greatly to labour  
To search and have knowledge of truth and veritie,  
For certainly to man can be no more pleasure,  
No more jocunde pastime, joy nor felicitie,  
Than dayly for to learne and move prudent to be,  
To favour and perceyve by reason what is right,  
Then clered is his minde with perfect inward lightes."<sup>3</sup>

In similar fashion Chesterfield admonishes, "Use and assert your own reason; reflect, examine; and analyse every thing, in order to form a sound and mature judgment; let no one impose upon your understanding, mislead your actions, or dictate your conversation. Be early what, if you are not, you will, when too late, wish you had been. Consult your reason betimes: I do not say that it will always prove an unerring guide; for human reason is not infallible;

1. The Courtier, p 51.

2. op. cit., p 99.

3. The Mirrour of Good Maners, p 10.



but it will prove the least erring guide that you can follow. Books and conversation may assist it; but adopt, neither blindly and implicitly, every book by that best rule, which God has given to direct us, reason. Of all the troubles, do not decline, as many people do, that of thinking."<sup>1</sup> And again, "All you learn, and all you can read, will be of little use, if you do not think and reason upon it yourself. One reads to know other people's thoughts; but if we take them upon trust, without examining and comparing them with our own, it is really living upon other people's scraps, or retailing other people's goods. To know the thoughts of others, is of use, because it suggests thoughts to one's self and helps one to form a judgment, but to repeat other people's thoughts without considering whether they are right or wrong is the talent only of a parrot, or most of a player."<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Lord Burghley in 1576, the Earl of Essex wrote, "I have wished his Education to be in your Household(Lord Burghley), though the same had not been allotted to your Lordship as Master of the Wardes; and that the whole Tyme which he should spend in England in his Minority, might be divided in Attendance, upon my Lord Chamberlayne and you, to the End, that as he might frame himself to the Example of my Lord of Sussex in all the Actions of his Life, tending either to the Warres or the Institution of a Nobleman, so that he might also reverence your Lordship for your Wisdome and Gravity, and lay

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 218, Letter CLXXVL.  
 2. op. cit., p 61, Letter LXVII.

up your Counsellis and Advises in the Treasury of his Hart."<sup>1</sup>

Travel was considered necessary for the proper training of a gentleman of either century. "The young gentleman who was ambitious of playing a part in state affairs needed to collect such information as a sojourn in the various capitals, often with the English ambassador's train, could give, and such poise and ease of manners as home-keeping youths would not obtain .... One point, however, was well agreed upon: the better informed a man was when he went on his travels, the more information he could bring home with him. To insure that proper use be made of his opportunities, a tutor was recommended. Provided with a wise tutor, plenty of funds and introductions to prominent men, foreigners and Englishmen abroad, the young gentleman of serious intent and corresponding ability could expect to return to England from a two or three years' study abroad, a far wiser and better bred man than when he left."<sup>2</sup> Sidney wrote to his brother, "For hard sure it is to know England, without you know it by comparing it with some other country; no more than a man can know the swiftness of his horse without seeing him well matched."<sup>3</sup> Roger Ascham warned against the evils of travel thus, "Therefore, if wise men will needs send their sons into Italy, let them do it wisely, under the keep and guard of him who by his wisdom and honesty, by his example and authority, may be able to keep them safe and sound, in the fear of God, in

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 127. Letters of Essex to Burghley, 1576, quoted by Furniwall, The Babes Book. Forewards, p XV.

2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 145.

3. op. cit., p 143.

Christ's true religion, in good order and honesty of living; except they will have them run headlong into over many jeopardies, as Ulysses had done many times, if Pallas had not always governed him. .... Whereby the divine poet Homer meant covertly that love of honesty and hatred of ill, which David doth more plainly call the fear of God; the only remedy against all enchantments of sin."<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield followed the plan of these conduct books and sent his son with a tutor into different countries and courts and constantly admonished him against the usual abuse of foreign travel. "But, remember, that seeing is the least material object of traveling; hearing and knowing are the essential points."<sup>2</sup> "The forms of government, the maxims of policy, the strength or weakness, the trade and commerce of the several countries you see or hear of are the important objects."<sup>3</sup> "Do not imagine that this knowledge, which I so much recommend to you, is confined to books, pleasing useful and necessary as that knowledge is; but I recommend in it the great knowledge of the world, still more necessary than that of books."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the futility of travel to improve the usual gentleman of either period may most clearly be shown by quoting the admirable imaginary conversation Chesterfield has take place between young Stanhope and an Englishman traveling abroad: "Englishman--'Will you come and breakfast with me tomorrow; there will be four or five of our countrymen; we have provided chaises,

1. The Scholemaster, p 75.

2. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 107, Letter CXI.

3. op. cit., p 247, Letter CXCII.

4. op. cit., p 110, Letter CXII

and we will drive somewhere out of town after breakfast?'

"Stanhope--'I am sorry I cannot; but I am obliged to be at home all morning.'

"Englishman--'Why, then, we will come and breakfast with you.'

"Stanhope--'I can't do that neither; I am engaged.'

"Englishman--'Well, then, let it be the next day.'

"Stanhope--'To tell you the truth, it can be no day in the morning; for I neither go out, nor see any body at home before twelve.'

"Englishman--'And what the devil do you do with yourself till twelve o'clock?'

"Stanho e--'I am not by myself, I am with Mr. Harte, (tutor).'

"Englishman--'Then, what the devil do you do with him?'

"Stanhope--'We study different things; we read, we converse.'

"Englishman--'Very pretty amusement indeed! Are you to take Orders then?'

"Stanhope--'Yes, my father's orders, I believe, I must take.'

"Englishman--'Why hast thou no more spirit, than to mind an old fellow a thousand miles off?'

"Stanhope--'If I don't mind his orders, he won't mind my draughts.'

"Englishman--'What does the old prig threaten then? threatened folks live long; never mind threats.'

"Stanhope--'No, I can't say threatened me in his life; but I believe I had best not provoke him.'

.....

"Englishman--'So he stuffs you all morning with Greek, and Latin, and Logic, and all that. Egad, I have a dry-nurse, too, but I



never looked into a book with him in my life. I have not so much as seen the face of him this week; and don't care a louse if I never see it again.'

"Stanhope--'My dry-nurse never desires any thing of me that is not reasonable, and for my own good, and, therefore, I like to be with him.'

"Englishman--'Very sententious and edifying, upon my word; at this rate you will be reckoned a very good young man.'

"Stanhope--'Why, that will do me no harm.'

"Englishman--'Will you be with us tomorrow in the evening then?' We shall be ten with you; and I have got some excellent good wine; and we'll be very merry.'

"Stanhope--'I am very much obliged to you, but I am engaged for the evening, tomorrow; first, at Cardinal Albanis; and then to sup at the Venetian Ambassadors's.'

"Englishman--'How the devil can you like being always with these foreigners? I never go amongst them, with all their formalities and ceremonies. I am never easy in company with them, and I don't know why, but I am ashamed.'

"Stanhope--'I am neither ashamed nor afraid; I am very easy with them; they are very easy with me; I get the language and I see their character, by conversing with; and that is what we are sent abroad for, is it not?'

"Englishman--'I hate your modest women's company; your women of fashion as they call 'em; I don't know what to say to them for

my part.'

"Stanhope--'Have you ever conversed with them?'

"Englishman--'No, I never conversed with them; but I have been sometimes in their company, though much against my will.'

"Stanhope--'But, at least they have done you no hurt; which is, probably, more than you can say of the women you do converse with.'

"Englishman--'That's true, I own; but for all that, I would rather keep company with my surgeon half the year, than with your women of fashion the year round.'

"Stanhope--'Tastes are different, you know, and every man follows his own.'

"Englishman--'That's true; but thine's a devilish odd one, Stanhope; all morning with thy dry-nurse, all the evening in formal fine company; and all day long afraid of old Daddy in England. Thou art a queer fellow and I am afraid there is nothing to be made of thee.'

"Stanhope--'I am afraid so, too.'

"Englishman--'Well, then, good night to you; you have no objection, I hope, to my being drunk tonight, which I certainly will be.'

"Stanhope--'Not in the least; nor to your being sick tomorrow, which you as certainly will be, and so good night, too.'

From the several quotations and references, it is easily seen that the sixteenth century conduct books advocated education and travel as essential in the preparation for a courtier, and

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, pp 250 ff.

the eighteenth century Letters show a similar need of them in the training of a statesman,

Sir Philip Sidney was considered a ong the Elizabethans a model for courtiers. His youth was ideally spent. Ludovic Bryskett in A Discourse of Civil Life emphasizes this fact, "Sir Philip Sidney who being but seventeen yeeres of age when he began to travell and coming to Paris, where he was ere long sworne Gentleman of the chamber to the French King was so admired among the graver sort of Courtiers, that when they could at any time have him in their companie and conversation, they would be very joyfull, and no lesse delighted with his ready and witty answers, then astonished to hear him speake the French language so well and aptly, having bin so short a while in the country. So was he likewise esteemed in all places else where he came in his travell as well in Germane as in Italie. And the judgement of her Majestie employing him, when he was not yet full twenty two yeeres old, in embassage to congratulate with the Emperor that now is his coming to the Empire may serve for a sufficient prooffe, what excellencie of understanding and what stayedness was in him at those yeeres."<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the ideal, Chesterfield precepts: "Remember that, that whatever knowledge you do not solidly lay the foundation of before you are eighteen, you will never be the master of while you breathe. Knowledge is a comfortable and necessary retreat and shelter for us in an advanced age; and if we do not plant it while young, it will give us no shade when we

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, pp 47 f.

grow old", and "If you should sometimes think it a little laborious, consider that labour is the unavoidable fatigue of a necessary journey. The more hours a day you travel, the sooner you will be at your journey's end."<sup>1</sup> and "People are, in general, what they are made, by education and company, from fifteen to twenty five; consider well, therefore, the importance of your next eight or nine years."<sup>2</sup>

Lord Chesterfield, as before stated, was an ardent admirer of the classic and so quite frequently, refers to them to give weight and worth to his own admonitions. For example, in urging Stanhope to secure the greatest learning possible, he quotes Cicero and Seneca. "Cicero: 'Though we did not reap such advantages from the study of letters as we manifestly do, and that in the acquirement of learning, pleasure only were the object in pursuit, yet that recreation of mind should be deemed very worthy of a liberal man. Other amusements are not always suitable to time and place; nor are they of all ages and conditions. These studies are nourishment to youth, pleasure to old age, an ornament to posterity, a refuge and comfort in adversity. They divert us at home, are of no hindrance abroad; they pass the night with us, accompany us when we travel, attend upon us in our rural retreats.'

"Seneca: 'If you employ your time in study, you will avoid every disgust in life. You will not wish for night, nor be weary of the day. You will be neither a burden to yourself, nor unwell-

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 135, Letter CXXXIII.

2. op. cit., p 154, Letter CLIV.



come to others.' Remember how necessary these great men thought learning was, but for the use, the ornament and the pleasure of life."<sup>1</sup> Here learning is desirable for personal living and enjoyment. The educated gentleman lived on a higher plane than did the illiterate. The Mirrour of Good Maners teaches the courtier the same doctrine,

"Some fooles offending are somewhat excusable,  
By reason not parfite and simple ignorance,  
But thou having science by longe continuance,  
Still blindly persevering in thy misgovernance?  
Art thou called master, goest thou so long to schole,  
To be in thy living much lewder then a foole?"<sup>2</sup>

Chesterfield constantly reiterates the value of common-sense applied in all learning, "Common-sense is the best sense I know of: Abide by it, it will counsel you best. Read and hear, for your amusement, ingenious systems, nice questions subtly agitated, with the refinements that warm imaginations suggest; but consider them only as excitations for the mind, and return always to settle with common-sense."<sup>3</sup> "The sure characteristic of a sound and strong mind, is to find in everything, certain bounds. These boundaries are marked out by a very fine line, which only good sense and attention can discover; it is much too fine for vulgar eyes. In manners, this line is good-breeding, beyond it, is troublesome ceremony; short of it, it unbecoming negligence and inattention.

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 28, Letter XXX.

2. Mirrour of Good Maners, p 17.

3. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 190, Letter CLXIV.

In morals, it divides ostentatious puritanism from criminal relaxation; in religion, superstition from impiety; and, in short, every virtue from its kindred vice or weakness. I think you have sense, and learn to walk upon it."<sup>1</sup>

In the sixteenth century liberal studies, such as rhetoric, mathematics, astronomy, music, poetry, history, and grammar were suitable for the courtier. A university degree as well as attendance at the Inns of Court was considered a proper course of training.<sup>2</sup> Lyly stresses the importance of choosing wise and upright tutors and the necessity of leading the child gently into the way of knowledge lest his mind and body receive irreparable hurt,

"Euphues: First, that he be of honest parents, nursed of his mother; brought up in such a place as is incorrupt, both for the ayre and manners, with such a person as is undefiled, of great seal, of profound knowledge, of absolute perfection, that he be instructed in Philosophy, whereby he may attaine learning, and have in al sciences a snasse, whereby he may readily dispute of anything. That his body be kept in his pure strength by honest exercise, his wit and memory by diligent study. That he abandon al allurements of vice, and continually encline to vertue."<sup>3</sup>

Chesterfield thinks "Classical knowledge, that is, Greek and Latin, is absolutely necessary for every body, because every body has agreed to think and call it so. .... Rhetoric, logic, a little geometry and general notion of astronomy.....modern language,

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 214, Letter CLXXIV.

2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 55.

3. op. cit., p 127.

modern history, chronology, and geography, the law of nations. You must absolutely speak all the modern languages as purely and correctly as the natives, French, German, Italian, Spanish."<sup>1</sup> He also considered excellent tutors and wholesome moral atmosphere in early years quite necessary, and provided for both.

The English renaissance theory concerning the proper kind of education for the courtier was deduced mainly from the ancient philosophers and orators who looked to the wider relationships of life from the scholars of northern Europe who viewed life and man's responsibilities seriously, from the reasonableness and completeness of the classical ideals, and from the light grace of the Italian.<sup>2</sup> One of the first educational theorists and the first one to publish a book in the English language on the subject of education was Thomas Elyot. His book, The Boke Named the Governour, has three divisions; namely Book I the education of a governour; Book II the meditations of a prospective governour; and Book III the character of a governour. Book I discusses at length the extreme care in the choice of a nurse who must be noble in character and able to speak pure and elegant Latin so that the small child may have the direct method of learning that language. When the child is seven years of age, he is to be provided with an excellent tutor. Music, drawing, geometry, astronomy, cosmography are to be taught, also Greek authors and the use of grammars. The child is not to be detained too long in

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 161, Letter CLII.
2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 119.

tedious grammar, as his fervent desire to learn is to control matter. The books recommended for his reading are Aesop's Fables, Select Dialogs of Lucian, Comedies of Aristophanes, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Silius, Lucanus, Hesiodus, Strabo. These are to be read before the lad is twelve years old. From then to seventeen, he is to study history, reading in this connection--Livy, Xenophon, Quintus Curtius, Julius Caesar, Sallust, and Tacitus. At seventeen years, he devotes most of his time to moral philosophy pondering Aristotle's Ethics, Tully's Offices, and the philosophy of Plato. He also needs to become very familiar with Erasmus's Institution of a Christian Prince. During this entire time his physical education must not be neglected. He is to be proficient in wrestling, running, swimming, defence with the battle-axe, riding, shooting with the long bow, vaulting, hunting of all kinds, dancing. Riding a 'great horse and rough' is the most honorable of the exercises, and shooting, the principal one.<sup>1</sup> The Boke Named the Governour went through eight editions before 1585 and even later was quoted as an authority.<sup>2</sup>

The early education of Stanhope consisted of simple history, mythology, biography, Latin, Greek; then, later literary forms, history, geography, art, music, science, logic, astronomy, geometry, painting, sculpture, architecture, modern language, statecraft, diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> He was to devote his mornings entirely to study and learning, to learn the exercises of riding, dancing, and

1. The Boke Named the Governour, Intro. pp 19 ff.

2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 118.

3. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, pp 4 f; p 23; pp 75 ff.



fencing, and others suitable for a gentleman to know. Thus, in many respects the education of the gentleman of both centuries was strikingly similar. Both the writers of the sixteenth century and Chesterfield believed in the early training in Latin and Greek. Elyot, "I wolde have hym lerne greke and latine autours both at one time: orels to begyn with greke, for as moche as that it is hardest to come by....and if a childe do begyn therein at seven yeres of age, he may continually lerne greke autours thre yeres, and in the meane tyme use the latin tonge as a familiar language: which in a noble mannes sonne may well come to passe, havyng none other persons to serve him or kepyng hym company, but suche as can speake latine elegantly."<sup>1</sup> Castiglione, "in letters I will have him to be more than indifferently well seen, at the least in those studies which they call Humanity, and to have not only the understanding of the Latin tongue, but also of the Greek, because of the many and sundry things that with great excellency are written in it. Let him much exercise himself in poets, and no less in orators and historiographers, and also in writing rhyme and prose, and especially in this our vulgar tongue."<sup>2</sup> Elyot recommends Homer as a worthy Greek author to read, "Therefore I nowe conclude that there is no lesson for a yonge gentleman to be compared with Homere, if he be playnly and substancially expounded and declared by the mayster;"<sup>3</sup> and Virgil as the best of Latin writers, "Some latine autour wold be therewith myxte, and

1. The Boke Named the Governour, pp 34 f.

2. The Courtier, p 70.

3. The Boke Named the Governour, p 37.

specially Virgile, which in his worke called Ereidos, is most lyke to Homere, and all moste the same Homere in latine." "Finally, this noble Virgile, like to good morise, giveth to a child, if he wyll take it, every thinge apte for his witte and capacitie; wherefore he is in the ordre of lernynge to be preferred before any other autor latine."<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield in Letter XXV when Stanhope was but seven years of age writes, "I received your letter, and if you go on to learn at this rate, you will soon puzzle me, in Greek especially; .... Mr. Maillaire (tutor) writes me word that he intends to bring you acquainted with Horace, Virgil, Terence, and Martial, who are the most famous Latin poets;"<sup>2</sup> and in Letter CCXXXIV, "It is Greek that must distinguish you in the learned world, Latin alone will not."<sup>3</sup>

In Elizabeth's day, music played a large part in the life of the time. The Queen was an able performer on the virginal; consequently, rare must have been the courtier who could not play and sing a song to his lady.<sup>4</sup> Castiglione states, "music is not only an ornament but also necessary for a Courtier;"<sup>5</sup> and "beside his understanding and cunning upon the book, have skill in like manner on sundry instruments. And principally in courts, where, beside the refreshing of vexations, many things are taken in hand to please women withal, whose tender and soft

1. The Booke Named the Governour, p 37; p 39.

2. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 23, Letter XXV.

3. op. cit., p 344, Letter CCXXXIV.

4. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 161.

5. The Courtier, p 77.

hearts are soon pierced with melody and filled with sweetness."<sup>1</sup> Elyot applies the knowledge of music not only to the harmony of sounds but also to the studies of poetry and geometry, "he shall commend the perfecte understandinge of musike, declaring howe necessary it is for the better attaynyng the knowledge of a publicke weale: whiche, as I before have said, is made of an ordre of astates and degrees, perfect harmony: which he shall afterwarde more perfectly understande, when he shall happen to rede the boke of Plato and Aristotle, of publicke weales, where-in be written divers examples of musike and geometrye."<sup>2</sup> Chesterfield would have his son know the elements of music but would not have him a musician, "Few things would mortify me more, than to see you bearing a part in a concert, with a fiddle under your chin, or a pipe in your mouth."<sup>3</sup> Concerning the study and acquirement of skill or judgment in painting and sculpture, Castiglione writes, "The Courtier ought also to have a knowledge in painting, since it was honest and profitable, and much set by in those days when men were of a more prowess than they are now,"<sup>4</sup> and "It is a help to him to judge of the image, both old and new, of vessels, buildings, old coins, cameos, gravings, and such other matters, it maketh him also understand the beauty of lively bodies, and not only in the sweetness of the physiognomy, but in the proportion of all the rest, as well in men as other living creatures."<sup>5</sup>

1. The Courtier, p 75.

2. The Boke Named the Governour, p 28.

3. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 225, Letter CLXXX.

4. The Courtier, p 83.

5. op. cit., p 78.

Elyot states, "....that a noble child, by his owne naturall disposition, and not by coercion, may be induced to receive perfect instruction in these sciences....as a secrete pastime, or recreation of the wittes, late occupied in serious studies."<sup>1</sup> On this subject Chesterfield writes thus interestingly, "There are likewise many valuable remains of the remotest antiquity (Venice), and many fine pieces of the Antico Moderno; all which deserve a different sort of attention from that which your countrymen commonly give them. .... You will, I am sure, view them in another light; you will consider them as you would a poem to which they are akin. You will observe, whether the sculptor has animated the stone, or the painter his canvas, into the just expression of those sentiments and passions which should characterise and mark their several figures. You will examine, likewise, whether in their groups there be a unity of action, or proper relation; a truth of dress and manners. Sculpture and painting are very justly called liberal arts; a lively and strong imagination, together with a just observation, being absolutely necessary to excel in either; which, in my opinion, is by no means the case of music, though called a liberal art."<sup>2</sup>

The Sixteenth century was a period of extensive exploration and discovery. Naturally, interest was awakened or quickened in geography, or cosmography as it was then called, in astronomy and in geometry. Many courtiers were actually leaving the court and

1. The Boke Named the Governour, p 31.

2. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 235, Letter CLXXXV.



braving the dangers of voyage. Hence, part of the education of a courtier would be a knowledge of these subjects. Elyot gives this opinion on the study of cosmography, "All be it there is none so good lernynge as the demonstration of cosmographie by materiall figures and instruments, havynge a good instructour.. ..I can not tell what more pleasure shulde happen to a gentil witte, than to beholde in his owne house every thyng that with in all the worlde is contained."<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli thinks the prince should be active in sports and possess geographical knowledge, "ought to inure himself to sports, and by hunting and hawking, and such like recreation, accustom his body to hardship, and hunger, and thirst, and at the same time inform himself of the coasts and situation of the country, the bigness and elevation of the mountains, the extent of plains etcera....purpose--to know country and to provide better for its defence."<sup>2</sup> Chesterfield constantly reiterates in the first forty or forty-five letters, the practical value of geography and history. Throughout the correspondence, he urges geographical and historical knowledge, for it will equip a statesman with most useful knowledge. "Remember, too, that great modern knowledge is still more necessary than ancient; and that you had better know perfectly the present, than the old state of Europe; though I would have you well acquainted with both."<sup>3</sup>

The reading of ancient classics for pleasure and profit was repeatedly stressed in The Boke Named the Governour and to a less

1. The Boke Named the Governour, p 43.

2. The Prince, p 94.

3. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 146, Letter CXLII.

degree in The Scholemaster. Some of Elyot's teachings are ".... after a few and quicke rules of grammer, immediately, or inter-lasyng hit therwith, wolde be redde to the childe Esopes fables in greke; in which argument children moche do delite. And surely it is a moche pleasant lesson and also profitable, as well for that it is elegant and brefe, as also in those fables is included moche morall and politike wisdomes;"<sup>1</sup> "Wherefore in his place let us bringe in Horace, in whom is containd moche varietie of lernynge and quickenesse of sentence;"<sup>2</sup> "I wolde set nexte unto hym two boke of Ouid, the one called Metamorphosios, which is as moche to saye as, chaunge of men in the other figure or fourme; the other is entitled De festis: where the ceremonies of the gentiles and especially the Romans be expressed;"<sup>3</sup> "Of which two oratours may be attayned; not only eloquence, excellent and perfecte. but also preceptes of wisdomes, and gentyll maners; with most com odious examples of all noble vertues and pollicies;"<sup>4</sup> "Isocrates concerning the lesson of oratours, is every where wonderfull profitable, havynge almost as many wyse sentences as he hath wordes; and with that is so swete and delectable to rede, that, after him, almost all other seeme unsavory and tedious; and in persuadyng, as well a prince, as a private persone, to vertue, in two very little and compendious workes wherof he made the one to kynge Nicocles, the other to his friend Demonicus wolde be perfectly konned, and had in continual memorie;"<sup>5</sup> "The utilities

1. The Boke Named the Governour, p 35.

2. op. cit., p 39.

3. op. cit., p 39.

4. op. cit., p 42.

5. op. cit., p 42.

that a noble man shall have by redyng these oratours. is that, when he shall happe to reason in counsaile, or shall speke in a great audience, or to strange ambassadours of great princes, he shall not be constrainyd to speake wordes sodayne and disordered but shall bestowe them aptly and in their places;<sup>1</sup> "Caesar's commentaries are studiously to be redde of the princes of this realme of Englande and their counsailors;<sup>2</sup> and "It wold not be forgotten that the lytell boke of the most excellent doctour Erasmus Rotterodamus which booke is intituled the Institution of a Christian Prince, wolde be as familiare always with gentilmen, at all tymes, and in every age, as was Homere with the great kynge Alexander, or Xenophon with Scipio."<sup>3</sup> Ascham teaches, "After that your scholar....shall come to a ready perfectness in translating.....Then take this order with him: read daily unto him some booke of Tully, as the third booke of Epistles, or that excellent epistle containing almost the whole first booke ad Q. fra some comedy of Terrence or Plautus....Caesar's Commentaries are to be read with all curiosity wherein especially without all exception to be made, either by friend or foe, is seen the unspotted propriety of the Latin tongue,....or some Orations of T. Livius, such as be both longest and plainest;"<sup>4</sup> "I have heard worthy M. Cheke many times say, 'I would have a good student pass and journey through all authors, both Greek and Latin, but he that will dwell in these few booke only, first in God's Holy Bible, and then join

1. The Boke Named the Governour, p 42.

2. op. cit., p 46.

3. op. cit., p 48.

4. The Scholemaster, p 93.

with it Tully in Latin, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Isocrates, and Demosthenes in Greek, must needs prove an excellent man.'..  
..In histories, and namely in Livy, the like diligence of imitation could bring excellent learning, and breed staid judgement in taking any like matter in hand."<sup>1</sup> In the Letters to his Son,

Chesterfield constantly admonishes his son to read and to read only the best, "Nothing forms so true a taste, as the reading the ancient authors with attention;"<sup>2</sup> "I have often told you already that nothing will help your invention more, and teach you to think more justly, than reading, with care and attention, the Ancient Greek and Latin authors, especially the poets;"<sup>3</sup>

"Read only useful books and never quit a subject till you are thoroughly master of it, but read and inquire on till then;"<sup>4</sup>

"I am glad that you begin to taste Horace; the more you read him the better you will like him. His Art of Poetry is, in my mind, his master-piece; and the rules he there lays down are applicable to almost every part of life. To avoid extremes, to observe propriety, to consult one's own strength, and to be consistent from beginning to end, are precepts as useful for the man as for the poet;"<sup>5</sup> "Stick to the best established books in every language, the celebrated poets, historians, orators, or philosophers. By these means, you will make fifty percent of that time, of which others do not make above three or four or probably nothing at all."<sup>6</sup>

1. The Scholemaster, pp 150 f.

2. Chesterfield's Letters To His Son, p 51, Letter LVII.

3. op. cit., p 56, Letter LXII.

4. op. cit., p 172, Letter CLVII.

5. op. cit., p 102, Letter CVI.

6. op. cit., p 305, Letter CCXVI.



History was valued by the sixteenth century as a great storehouse of examples, and, therefore, a much better instructor for the gentleman in politics and morals than philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Elyot says that "Cicero, father of the latin eloquence, calleth an historie 'the witnessse of tymes, maister of life, the lyfe of remembrance, of truthe the lyght, and messenger of antiquite!'"<sup>2</sup> He, himself, thinks that, "In the lernynge of these autors a yonge gentelman shal be taught to note and mark, not only the ordre and elegancie in declaration of the historie, but also the occasion of the warres, the counsailes and preparations on either part, the estimation of the capitaines, the continuance of the batle, the fortune and successe of the holle affaires. Semably out of the warres in other dayly affaires, the estate of the publike weale, if hit be prosperous or in decaye, what is the very occasion of the one or of the other, the forme and maner of the governance thereof, the good and evyll qualitties of them that be rulers, the commodities and good sequels of vertue, the discommodities and evyll conclusion of vicious license."<sup>3</sup> Chesterfield in his Letters reviews ancient history for his son and explains the forms of government, characters of various great leaders, and discusses the great practical value of history to one who plans statesmanship. In Letter XVI, he writes, "By the help of history, a young man may, in some measure, acquire the experience of old age. In reading what has been done, he is apprised of what he has to do; and the more he

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 133.

2. The Boke Named the Governour, p 44 ff.

3. op. cit., p 47.

is informed of what is past, the better he will know how to conduct himself for the future.<sup>1</sup>

Although Elyot advised not to detain a child too long in tedious grammar but to let his interest select the matter, logic and rhetoric played an important part in the education of the courtier. Sir Humphrey Gilbert listed logic and rhetoric first in importance in the subject matter to be taught a gentleman.<sup>2</sup> Elyot, too, advises the teaching of Logic and rhetoric, "After that XIV yeres be passed of a child's age, his master if he can, or some other, studiously exercised in the arte of an oratour, shall first rede to hym some what of that part of logike that is called Topica, eyther of Cicero, or els of that noble clerke of Alemaine, which late floured, called Arigiola whose worke prepareth invention, tellynge the place from whens an argument for the profe of any mater may be taken with little studie; and that lesson, with moche and diligent lernynge havynge mixte there with none other exercise, will in the space of half a yere be perfectly kanned. Immediately after that, the arte of Rhetorike wolde be sembably taught, either in greke, out of Hermogenes or of Quintilian in latine."<sup>3</sup> Chesterfield, a most correct and finished speaker himself, knows the value of pure speech, "The first thing you should attend to is, to speak whatev r language you do speak in its greatest purity, and according to the rules of Grammar; for we must never offend against grammar nor make use of

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 12, Letter XVI.

2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 133.

3. The Boke Named the Governour, p 41.

words which are not really words. This is not all, for not to speak ill, is not sufficient; we must speak well; and the best method of attaining to that is, to read the best authors with attention; and to observe how people of fashion speak, and those who express themselves best; for shopkeepers, common people, footmen, and maid-servants, all speak ill. They make use of low and vulgar expressions, which people of rank never use. .... In order to avoid all these faults we must read with care; observe the turn and expressions of the best authors, and not pass a word which we have the least doubt, without exactly inquiring the meaning of it;"<sup>1</sup> "He should likewise adorn what he says by proper metaphors, similes, and other figures of rhetoric; and he should enliven it, if he can, by quick and sprightly turns of wit;"<sup>2</sup> "As to the correctness and elegance of your writing, attention to grammar does the one, and to the best authors the other."<sup>3</sup> Castiglione says of style and sentence structure, "sentences-- ....fair, witty, subtle, fine, and grave, according to the matter."<sup>4</sup> In similar thought, Chesterfield says, "Seek always for the best words and the happiest expressions you can find. Do not content with being barely understood; but adorn your thoughts, and dress them as you would your person."<sup>5</sup> "Bacon found this fault with the universities that they brought the student too young into the

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 38, Letter XVII.

2. op. cit., p 41, Letter XLV.

3. op. cit., p 333, Letter CCXXIX.

4. The Courtier, p 52.

5. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 285 f, Letter CCVII.

study of logic and rhetoric also, before their minds were well filled with matter, so that these 'gravest of sciences' became contemptible and turned to the uses of 'childish sophistry and ridiculous affectation.'<sup>1</sup>

Elyot's plan for education suggested moral philosophy be taught in the later teen age "it were needfull to rede unto hym some workes of philosophie; specially that parte that may enforme him unto vertuous maners, which parte of philosophie is called morall.....two of the fyrste booke of the worke of Aristotell called Ethicæ, wherein is contained the definitions and propre significationes of every vertue; and that to be learned in greke; ....Forthe with wolde folowe the work of Cicero, called in Latin De officiis whereunto yet is no propre englishe worde to be gyven but to provide for it some maner of exposition, it may be sayde in this fourme: 'Of the duties and maners appertaynyng to men.' But above all other, the workes of Plato wolde be most studiously radde whan the judgment of a man is come to perfection, and by the other studies is instructed in the fourme of speakinge and philosophers used;<sup>2</sup> and later "Lord God, what incomparable sweetness of words and mater shall he finde in the saide workes of Plato and Cicero; wherein is joined gravitie with dilectation, excellent wysedome with divine eloquence, absolute vertue with pleasure incredible, and every place is so inforced with profitable counsaile, joynd with honestie, that those thre booke (Aristotle also) be

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 132.

2. The Booke Named the Governour, p 47.



almost sufficient to make a perfect and excellent governour."<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli's moral teaching shows a distinction between the good man and the good ruler. "To the good man belonged such private virtues as liberality, mercy, truthfulness, affability, purity, guilelessness, good nature. For the good ruler the only consideration was how to preserve the state; nothing was a vice which brought success, nothing a virtue which invited failure."<sup>2</sup> "Humphrey listed as public virtues liberality, justice, and courtesy which were necessary to perform one's duty to others and as private virtues temperance and prudence, which were necessary for ruling oneself, and also necessary for the attaining of public virtues."<sup>3</sup> Chesterfield gave early a sort of moral philosophy in which he sought to establish fundamental principles for good living. When the son was in his early teens, the father writes frankly and teaches the eighteenth century code of morality.

Although the education of the courtier was greatly stressed by the writers of conduct books, the character and behavior of the gentleman were more emphatically stated. The ideal gentleman was one who attained and maintained high standards in theory and practice. Elyot, the authority of the period on the ideal training of the youth, devoted two-thirds of The Boke Named the Governour to the virtues and meditations that became a gentleman. He discusses "justice which included fidelity and loyalty; fortitude taking pains, patience and magnanimity; temperance--abstinence, continence, constancy, moderation and sobriety in diet, sapience--

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 135.

2. op. cit., p 75.

3. op. cit., p 75.

prudence. To the four he added two others: majesty, that is, the bearing and manners appropriate to a man having high authority and calculated to inspire reverence; and what he called humanity, under which he included benevolence, beneficence, liberality, and friendship. He gathered them all up out of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Erasmus, and the Italians, Patrizi, and Pontano, to name the chief sources.<sup>1</sup> These virtues are for the most part discoursed upon by Castiglione's characters, the Lords at the Court of Urbino. Lord Cesare Gonzaga says, "Temperance, justice, stoutness of courage, wisdom, liberality, sumptuousness, desire to save a man's estimation, courtesy in talk--qualities the Courtier should possess to be an example to the prince."<sup>2</sup> The influence of Castiglione upon Spenser was, as is well known, so telling that Spenser fashioned The Faerie Queen upon the ideals formed by reading The Courtier. In The Fairy Queen, Spenser undertook to instruct his gentleman in the twelve private moral virtues and promised in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh that if he were encouraged, he would add later the twelve private virtues.<sup>3</sup> In Faery Queen, Spenser planned to produce an epic portraying a gentleman only by his moral qualities.<sup>4</sup> Ascham's ideal for a gentleman was based upon character rather than upon mental attainments, "And to say all in short, though I lack authority to give council, yet I lack not goodwill to wish that the youth in England, especially gentleman--and namely nobility--should be by good bringing up so ground-

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 76.

2. The Courtier, p 304.

3. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 75.

4. op. cit., p 70.

ed in judgment of learning, so founded in love of honesty, as when they should be called forth to the execution of great affairs, in service of their prince and country, they might be able to use and to order all experiences, were they good, were they bad, and that according to the square, rule, and line of wisdom, learning, and virtue."<sup>1</sup> In the *Mirrore of Good Maners*, we find advise thus,

"A strawe for thy study, thy reason is but blinde,  
To waste time in words, and on no dede to muse,  
But agayne to purpose; Therefore reader, refuse  
Superfluous study and care superfluous,  
And tourne thy chief study to dedes vertuous."<sup>2</sup>

Sir Philip Sidney was looked upon as a model courtier. An editor of *Arcadia* in his introduction writes, "Sir Philip Sidney, the poetic frequenter of the court, perfect at all points. It would be useless to strain the comparison (between him and Raleigh) any further; great and pure in his life, beautiful and elevated in his thoughts, at all times entering or treading the high region of poetic fancy. Sidney has left a name which will always be quoted when one desires an instance of that noble ideal, the English gentleman;"<sup>3</sup> and again, "Impetuous, brave, transparent as a fair casement, graceful, accomplished as a scholar and as a knight, a lover of his word, generous and open-handed, a sacrificer of himself, pure in his morals, unsullied in his honour.... Sidney never said a foolish or mean thing, and he did a thousand generous ones,

1. The Scholemaster, p 61.

2. The Mirroure of Good Maners, p 18.

3. Arcadia, Intro, p XII.

of which his last act was but the crowning grace. We accept him as the type of what an English gentleman should be. He hated anything that was sordid and mean."<sup>1</sup> Sidney, himself, in Arcadia expresses the qualities possessed by an ideal gentleman, Palladius, "A mind of most excellent composition, a piercing wit, quite void of ostentation, high erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy, an eloquence as sweet in the uttering as slow to come to the uttering, a behavior so noble as gave majesty to adversity, and all in a man whose age could not be above one and twenty years."<sup>2</sup> These few excerpts suffice to portray the value placed by the sixteenth century upon the character and worth of the gentleman. Chesterfield, too, held moral virtues in high esteem, although in his correspondence to Stanhope in his teen age, Chesterfield conforms to the eighteenth century standard of conduct. In the early letters, however, he makes it very clear that he wishes his son to form only praiseworthy habits and traits and to adopt correct principles of thought and conduct. In Letter LXVIII, he writes in true sixteenth century spirit, "You would find then, that virtue consists in doing good, and in speaking truth, that the effects of it are advantageous to all mankind, and to one's self in particular. Virtue makes us pity and relieve the misfortunes of mankind; it makes us promote justice and good order in society; and in general, contributes to whatever tends to the real good of mankind. To ourselves it gives an inward comfort and satisfaction,

1. Arcadia, Intro., p. XV.

2. op. cit., p. 16.



which nothing else can do, and which nothing can rob us of. All other advantages depend upon others as much as upon ourselves. Riches, power, and greatness may be taken away from us by the violence and injustice of others or by inevitable accidents, but Virtue depends only upon ourselves, and nobody can take it away from us. Sickness may deprive us of all the pleasure of the body; but it cannot deprive us of our virtue, nor of the satisfaction which we feel from it. A virtuous man, under all the misfortunes of life, still finds an inward comfort and satisfaction, which makes him happier than any wicked man can be, with all the other advantages of life. If a man has acquired great power and riches by falsehood, injustice, and oppression, he cannot enjoy them; because his conscience will torment him and constantly reproach him with the means by which he got them. The stings of his conscience will not even let him sleep quietly; but he will dream of his crimes; and in the day-time, when alone, and when he has time to think, he will be uneasy and melancholy. He is afraid of everything; for, as he knows mankind must hate him, he has reason to think they will hurt him if they can. Whereas, if a virtuous man be ever so poor, or unfortunate in the world, still his virtue is its own reward, and will comfort him under all afflictions. The quiet and satisfaction of his conscience make him cheerful by day, and sleep sound at nights; he can be alone with pleasure, and is not afraid of his own thoughts. Besides this, he is universally esteemed and respected; for even the most wicked people themselves

cannot help admiring and respecting Virtue in others."<sup>1</sup> In Letter CLII, he writes, "By merit, I mean the moral virtues, knowledge, and manners; as to the moral virtues, I say nothing to you, they speak best for themselves,--I will, therefore, only assure you, that without them you will be most unhappy;"<sup>2</sup> and in Letter CCXII, "For God's sake be scrupulously jealous of the purity of your moral character; keep it immaculate, unblemished, unsullied, and it will be unsuspected. Without this purity, you can have no dignity of character and without dignity of character it is impossible to rise in the world. You must be respectable, if you will be respected."<sup>3</sup>

Chesterfield, in the majority of instances, voices the thoughts, ambitions, hopes, and ideals of the Elizabethans in his admonitions, suggestions, and observations. He is very intimate in his subject matter and treatment; so are they. Moral virtues, personal habits in thinking, speaking, conduct in solitude and in society, personal relationships with various types of men and women; personal appearance are each given due attention by these guides to the would-be ideal gentleman. "The Prince is to have a care in all his actions to behave himself so as may give him the reputation of being excellent as well as great....much esteemed when he shows himself a sincere friend or a generous enemy."<sup>4</sup> "But, alas! shall justice halt, or shall she wink in one's cause that had lynx's eyes in another's, or rather shall all private respects give place to that holy name? Be it so, be it so; let my gray hairs be laid

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 62, Letter LXVIII.

2. op. cit., p 161, Letter CLII.

3. op. cit., p 295, Letter CCXII.

4. The Prince, p 139

in the dust with sorrow, let the small remnant of my life be to me an inward and outward desolation, and to the world a gazing-stock of wretched misery; but never, never let sacred rightfulness fall; it is immortal, and immortality ought to be preserved. If rightly I have judged, then rightly I have judged mine own children--unless the name of a child should have force to change the never-changing justice. No, No, Pyrocles and Musidorus, I prefer you much before my life, but I prefer justice as far before you. .... Your vices have degraded you from being prince and have disannulled your birthright."<sup>1</sup> "...accusing their folly in having believed he could faithfully love who did not love faithfulness, wishing us to take heed how we placed our good-will upon any other ground than proof of virtue, since length of acquaintance, mutual secrecies, nor height of benefits could bind a savage heart, no man being good to other that is not good in himself."<sup>2</sup> "No doubt consisteth in contempt of peril, in contempt of profit, and in meriting of the times wherein one liveth."<sup>3</sup> "The moste damnable vice and moste agayne iustice, in myne oppinion, is ingratitude, commonly called unkyndnesse. All be it, it is in divers fourmes and of sondry importaunce, as it is described by Seneca in this fourme. He is unkynde which denieth to have receyved any benefite that in dede he hathe receyved. He is unkynde that dissimuleth, he is unkynde that recompenseth not. But he is moste unkynde that forgetteth."<sup>4</sup> "More over he that is liberall neglecteth not his

1. Arcadia, p 471.

2. op. cit., p 210 f.

3. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 95.

4. The Booke Named the Governour, p 186.

substance or goodes, he gyveth it to all men, but useth it so as he may continually helpe therwith other, and gyveth whan, and where, and on whom it ought to be employed."<sup>1</sup>

"In hid thinges doubtfull geve not sodayne sentences,  
And certayne judgement in thinges incertayne,  
To callers importune, of wordes be suspence,  
Redoubling delays till truth be tryed playne,  
Better so, then judge, and then revoke agayne,  
In sentence remise is lesser injury,

Then in headling sentence pronounced hastely."<sup>2</sup>

"Mercy is a temperaunce of the mynde of hym that hath power to be avenged, and it is called in latine clementia, and is always loyned with reason."<sup>3</sup> "Therefore among the ancient writers he that much excelleth doth seldom farbeare praising himself. They indeed are not to be borne withal that, having no skill in them, will praise themselves; but we will not take our Courtier to be such a one."<sup>4</sup>

"Be not always speaking of yourself

Be not awkward in manner

Be not bashful

Be not forward

Talk not of yourself at all

Boast not

Angle not for praise."<sup>5</sup>

1. The Boke Named the Governour, p 159.

2. Mirrour of Good Maners, p 21.

3. The Boke Named the Governour, p 145.

4. The Courtier, p 28.

5. Galateo, p 264.



"....of so good a Judgment that he will not be given to understand black for white, nor presume more of himself than what he knoweth very manifestly to be true, and especially in those things which, if he bear well in mind the Lord Cesare rehearsed in his device of pastimes that we have many times used for an instrument to make many become foolish."<sup>1</sup> "Have alwaies in memory the benefittes you have receaved of others, and enforce your self to forgett suche iniuryes as others have Don unto you."<sup>2</sup> "They shall not thynke howe moche honour they receive, but howe moche care and burdene."<sup>3</sup>

"Live thou upon hill as thou would live in hall,  
 What thou wouldst not do in open company,  
 That do thou not alone, note that God seeth all,  
 He sitteth and seeth when that thou art solitary;  
 Wherefore in all places flee every villany,  
 Of dedes, of wordes, of small thoughtes be pure,  
 Till laudable custome be turned to nature."<sup>4</sup>

"Take heed that he be not like common jesters and parasites, and such as with fond matters move men to laugh, so in this brief kind the Courtier must be circumspect that he appear not malicious and venomous and speak taunts and quips only for spite and to touch the quick."<sup>5</sup> Chesterfield: Letter XLIV, "We cannot like a man who is always commending and speaking well of himself, and who is the hero of his own story; on the contrary, a man who endeavors

1. The Courtier, p 71.

2. Queen Elizabeth's Achademy, p 75.

3. The Boke Named the Governour, p 118.

4. The Mirrour of Good Maners, p 25.

5. The Courtier, p 167.

to conceal his own merit, who sets that of other people in its true light, who speaks but little of himself, and with modesty; such a man makes a favorable impression upon the understanding of his hearers, and acquires their love and esteem."<sup>1</sup> Letter XXXI, "One of the most important points of life is decency; which is to do what is proper, and where it is proper; for many things are proper at one time, and in one place, that are extremely improper in another; for example, it is very proper and decent that you should play some part of the day; but you must feel that it would be very improper and indecent if you were to fly your kite, or play at nine pins while you are with Mr. Maittaire;"<sup>2</sup> Again, "Pray observe, that the rope of the Sabines was more an advantageous than a just measure; yet the utility of it should not warrant its injustice; for we ought to endure every misfortune, even death, rather than be guilty of an injustice, and indeed, this is the only one that can be imputed to the Romans for many succeeding ages."<sup>3</sup> Letter CLXXXIII, "It is a decided folly to lose a friend for a jest; but, in my mind, it is not a much less degree of folly, to make an enemy of an indifferent and neutral person, for the sake of a bon mot."<sup>4</sup> Letter XXVIII, "If a person, though possessed of the finest understanding and greatest knowledge, should be a liar, cruel, proud, and covetous, he will be hated and detested by every human creature, and shunned like a wild beast."<sup>5</sup> Letter

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 40, Letter XLIV.

2. op. cit., p 29, Letter XXXI.

3. op. cit., p 14.

4. op. cit., p 233, Letter CLXXXIII.

5. op. cit., p 26, Letter XXVIII.

CXIII, "... but I have discovered laziness, inattention, and inattention, and indifference; faults which are only pardonable in old men. ... But a young man should be ambitious to shine and excel; alert, active, and indefatigable in the means of doing it."<sup>1</sup> Letter XLVI, "Such are the rewards that always crown virtue; and such the characters that you should imitate, if you would be a great and a good man, which is the only way to be a happy one."<sup>2</sup>

Again, turn to the conduct books,

"Be constant, stable, not harde and obstinate,  
No wise man him sheweth selfwilled interestable,  
Nor in his opinion all season indurate,  
A man of such manners oneth is tolerable,  
Thinke not that all tales are just and veritable,  
But wisely discusse thou suche things as may vary,  
And from the first report prove afterward contrary."<sup>3</sup>

"And for the first and chief let him avoid above all things curiosity. Afterward let him consider well what the thing is he doeth or speaketh, the place where it is done, in presence of whom, in what time, the cause why he doeth it, his age, his profession, the end whereto it tendeth, etcetera."<sup>4</sup>

"Flatter delicately.

Study the foibles of men.

Observe certain times of applying to these foibles.

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 111, Letter CXIII.
2. op. cit., p 43, Letter XLVI.
3. Mirrour of Good Manners, p 21.
4. The Courtier, p 100.

Judge of other men by yourself.

Command your temper and countenance.

Seem friendly to enemies.

Never see an affront, if you can help it.

Avoid wrangling.

Judge not of mankind rashly.

Fall in with the humour of men.

Trust not too implicitly to any.

Beware of proffered friendship.

Doubt him who swears to the truth of a thing.

Make no riotous attachments.<sup>1</sup>

"If thou make digression go not so farre wandring

But that thou may to purpose by light returne agayne,

Least some in derision warne thee in wordes playne,

Saying, syr consider it draweth fast to night

At last drawe to purpose, returne while it is light."<sup>2</sup>

"Talk not long together

Tell no stories

Use no hackneyed expressions.

Make no digressions

Hold no one by the button, when talking.

Punch no one in conversation.

Tire no man with your talk.

Engross not the conversation.

1. Galateo, p 256.

2. Mirrour of Good Manners, p 78.



Help not out, or forestall, the slow speaker  
Contradict no one.  
Give not your advice unasked.  
Attend to persons speaking to you.  
Speak not your mind on all occasions.  
Be not morose or surly.  
Adapt your conversation to the company.  
Be particular in your discourse to the ladies.  
Renew no disagreeable matters.  
Praise not a third person's perfections, when such praise  
will hurt the company present.  
Avoid rude expressions.  
Tax no one with a breach of promise.  
Be not dark or mysterious.  
Make no long apologies.  
Look people in the face when speaking.  
Raise not your voice, when repeating.  
Swear not in any form.  
Talk no scandal.  
Talk not of your own or others private concerns.  
Few jokes will bear repeating.  
Take up a favorable side in debating.  
Be not clamorous in dispute; but  
Dispute with good humour.  
Learn the characters of company, before you say much.  
Suppos not yourself laughed at.

Interrupt no one's story

Make no comparisons.

Ask no abrupt questions.

Reflect on no order of people.

Interrupt no one speaking

Display not your learning on all occasions."<sup>1</sup>

"Of wise men and learned frequent their company,

When thou art disposed thy mind to recreate,

After very watching and labour of study,

Of such company if thou be cleane private,

Mus then on some pleasour not hurting thine estate,

Meditation augmenteth the wittes semblably,

And quickeneth, as walking doth comfort the body."<sup>2</sup>

"A bolde minde in labour most diligent must be

In thinges of moste perill and most difficultie,

Where thinges be most hard there must thou to prevale

Chiefly put thy body to labour and travayle."<sup>3</sup>

A perusal of some of these details from Chesterfield's view point will reveal a striking similarity. Letter CLVII, "Have a will and an opinion of your own, and adhere to them steadily; but then do it with good humour, good breeding, and with urbanity; for you have not yet beard enough either to preach or censure."<sup>4</sup> Letter CXLVIII, "At least see every thing that you can see, and know every thing that you can know of it, by asking questions.

1. Galateo, p 269 ff.

2. Mirrour of Good Maners, p 56.

3. op. cit., p 41.

4. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 200, Letter CLVII.

See, likewise, every thing at the fair, from operas and plays, down to the Savoyard's raree shows. Every thing is worth seeing once; and the more one sees, the less one either wonders or admires."<sup>1</sup> Letter CXCIV, "I know of no one thing more offensive to a company, than inattention and distraction."<sup>2</sup> Letter CLXVI rules on talking,

"Talk often, but never long.

Tell stories very seldom

Take, rather than give, the tone of the company you are in.

Avoid as much as you can, in mixed companies argumentative, polemical conversations.

Avoid speaking of yourself.

Never speak of yourself at all.

A frank, open and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent interior; to be upon your own guard, and yet by a seeming natural openness, to put people off theirs.

Neither retail nor receive scandal, willingly.

Mimicry is amusement of low minds.

Gentlemen of high degree refrain from swearing.

Loud laughter is the mirth of the mob.

Whatever you say, say with pleasing countenance, voice, etc."<sup>3</sup>

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 155, Letter CXLVIII.

2. op. cit., p 253, Letter CXCIV.

3. op. cit., p 195 ff, Letter CLXVI.

Letter CLXXXIII, "The principal of these things is the mastery of one's temper, and that coolness of mind, and serenity of countenance which hinders us from discovering, by words, actions, or even looks, those passions or sentiments by which we are inwardly moved or agitated, and the discovery of which gives cooler and abler people such infinite advantages over us, not only in great business, but in all the most common occurrences of life."<sup>1</sup> Letter CXXVIII, "Endeavor, as much as you can, to keep company with people, above you: there you rise, as much as you sink with people below you; for you are whatever the company you keep is."<sup>2</sup> Letter CXXXI, "Never think any portion of time whatsoever too short to be employed; something or other may always be done in it."<sup>3</sup>

A continued perusal of the early authors emphasizes the fact that Chesterfield had been so greatly affected by the contents of these "handbooks" that he made their teachings quite unconsciously his own despite his living in a time sharply contrasted to the sixteenth century. As has been previously stated, Chesterfield was the epitome of the gentlemen in his time. Undoubtedly his reading in his early formative years gave him his conception and his ideals. His observation of society and his desire to excel, however, aided in the realization of these ideals. To proceed with the comparison between his Letters and the conduct books in point of character building may prove profitable.

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 231, Letter CLXXXIII.

2. op. cit., p 127, Letter CXXVIII.

3. op. cit., p 132, Letter CXXXI.



In a general way the moral virtues have been given, and the personal habits of the youth have been touched upon.

The youth in Shakespeare's time, was admonished on the use of time, his treatment of women and his love for them, upon the minutest factor in the process of character formation. Stanhope was instructed, warned cautioned with as scrupulous care. The subjoined extracts will bear out these statements:

"Take heed to time passed, consider time to come,  
That thou mayst well order thing present as is best,  
To thy lande and honour, according to wisdomes,  
With due advisement consider in thy brest,  
That all thy busyness conclude on one thing honest,  
And what hurt may folowe, or thinges profitable,  
So what ev r folowe shall be more tollerable.  
Be not always busy in workes corporal,  
But sometime release thee of wordly busynes  
Then occupy thy minde musing on thing morall:  
While thy body resteth and is at quietness,  
Some pastime of body is worse than idleness,  
As tables continuall, the cardes and the dice,  
But leave these, and study frequent and exercise."<sup>1</sup>

"I could wish, that every rational man would, every night when he goes to bed, ask himself these questions, 'What have I done today? Have I done any thing that can be of use to myself or

1. Mirrour of Good Maners, p 23.

others? Have I employed my time, or have I squandered it? Have I lived out the day, or have I dozed it away in sloth or laziness?' A thinking being must be pleased or confounded, according as he can answer himself these questions."<sup>1</sup>

In the gentleman's attitude toward women, Chesterfield differs from the earlier writers. Chesterfield has adopted the eighteenth century code of chivalry rather than the course of procedure ideally given by Castiglione. The latter's Lords were addressing at the Court of Urbine, their discourse to Ladies of the finest character and culture; Chesterfield's life was spent in paying addresses to women of questionable character and culture. The writers of sixteenth century conduct books patterned their code from Castiglione's ideal while Chesterfield endeavored to guide Stanhope through the superficialities of the eighteenth century court life. "For if beauty, manners, wit, goodness, knowledge, sobermode, and so many other virtuous conditions which we have given the woman, be the cause of the Courtier's love toward her, the end also of this love must needs be virtuous; and if nobleness of birth, skilfulness in martial feats, in letters, in music, gentleness, being both in speech and in behavior endowed with so many graces, be the means wherewithal the Courtier compasseth the woman's love, the end of that love must needs be the same condition that the means are by the which he cometh to it."<sup>2</sup> "A man of sense only trifles with them (women), plays with them, humors

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 529, Letter CCCXXIII.  
2. The Courtier, p 262.

and flatters them as he does with a sprightly, forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters; though he often makes them believe that he does both."<sup>1</sup> Letter CCLIV, "Try to engage the heart of every woman and the affections of almost every man you meet with,"<sup>2</sup> Occasionally, Chesterfield reveals a hidden respect for womankind; for example, Letter XCV, "Civility is particularly due to all women; and remember, that no provocation whatsoever can justify any man in not being civil to every woman; and the greatest man in England would justly be reckoned a brute, if he were not civil to the meanest woman;"<sup>3</sup> and Letter CXXXV, "The company of women of fashion will improve your manner, though not your understanding; and that complaisance and politeness, which are so useful in men's company, can only be acquired in women's."<sup>4</sup>

Dress, then, as always, was a matter of much thought. Castiglione says, "I will have the Courtier in all his garments handsome and cleanly, and take a certain delight in modest preciseness, but not for all that after a womanish or light manner, neither more in our point than in another, as we see many so curious about their hair that they forget all the rest."<sup>5</sup> Casa, "When you go into public, let your dress be genteel, and suitable to your age and station of life. He that does otherwise, shews contempt of the world, and too great an opinion of his own importance."<sup>6</sup>

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 182, Letter CLXI.

2. *op. cit.*, p 391, Letter CCLIV.

3. *op. cit.*, p 93, Letter XCV.

4. *op. cit.*, p 137, Letter CXXXV.

5. The Courtier, p 128.

6. Galateo, p 41.

In Letter CCXXXV, Chesterfield advises his son always to be well dressed in good taste, in fitness with the time and occasion, in a pleasing manner. His clothes are to be fashioned from proper material, by the best tailors; his hair is to be well-groomed; his stockings neat; his shoes well buckled; his person always accurately clean; his nails well manicured.<sup>1</sup>

Temperance was advocated most strongly, temperance in all things. Elyot said, "the temperate man would not show excess of joy at victory, or of sorrow at defeat, or of anger against enemies, or of desire for vengeance, or of greed for wealth or power; nor would he spend extravagantly upon his clothes and furniture, or overindulge any appetite even the appetite for food and drink."<sup>2</sup> Sir Humphrey Gilbert adopted the principle of temperance and wrote, "a Noble man thinke modestlye of him selfe, live temperatlye, and continentlye, behave hym selfe moderately and soberly in all things."<sup>3</sup> Chesterfield wished Stanhope to adopt the motto Ne quid nemis as a constant reminder and principle of conduct. He says, "Ne quid nemis is a most excellent rule in every thing; but commonly the least observed, by people of your age, in any thing."<sup>4</sup>

Concerning vice, Casa writes, "....every kind of vice ought indeed, on its own account, and without any other cause, to be esteemed extremely odious; for vice is a thing so very shocking

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 346 f, Letter CCXXXV.

2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 91.

3. op. cit., p 91.

4. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 242, Letter CLXXXVIII.



and unbecoming a gentleman, that every well regulated and virtuous mind must feel pain and disgust at the ignominious appearance of it....to shun every kind of vice, those especially which are the most shameful and base, such as luxury, avarice, cruelty, and the like; of which some are evidently vile and abject, such as gluttony and drunkenness; some filthy and obscene, such as lewdness; some shockingly wicked, as murder, and so of the rest. .. Now all these vices in general as things scandalous and unlawful, render a man thoroughly disagreeable in common life."<sup>1</sup> The Mirror of Good Maners contains many warnings against vice. The following quotation is an example,

"He suffreth not vile lust nor blind lascivitie.  
To subdue his reason, witte or intelligence,  
But boldly he bridleth all wilde enormitie,  
Much strongly subduing carnall concupiscence  
For certes no bondage nor vile obedience  
Is fowler to mankinde first fourmed reasonable,  
Then to be subdued to vices detestable."<sup>2</sup>

Chesterfield wisely expresses the thought, "Every excellency, and every virtue has its kindred vice or weakness; and if carried beyond certain bounds, sinks into one or the other. .... Vice in its true light is so deformed that it shocks us at first sight and would hardly ever seduce us, if it did not at first, wear the mask of some virtue."<sup>3</sup> and in Letter CCXIV, "People easily

1. Galateo, p 161 f.

2. Mirror of Good Maners, p 38.

3. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 145, Letter CXLII.

pardon, in young men, the common irregularities of the senses; but they do not forgive the least vice of the heart. The heart never grows better by age; I fear rather worse; always harder."<sup>1</sup>

To conclude this comparison regarding the formation of character, it may be interesting to read Casa's list of "sundry little accomplishments" for the Gentleman,

"Do the honours of your table well.

Drink no healths

Refuse invitations politely.

Dare to be singular in a right cause; and

Be not ashamed to refuse.

When at cards play genteely.

Strive to write well and grammatically

Spell your words correctly.

Affect not the rake.

Have some regard to the choice of your amusements.

Be secret.

Look not at your watch in company.

Never be in a hurry.

Support a decent familiarity.

Neglect not an old acquaintance

Be graceful in conferring favours.

Avoid all kinds of vanity.

Make no one in company feel his inferiors.

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 322, Letter CCXXV.

Be not witty at another's expense  
 Be sparing in raillery  
 Admire curiosities shewn you; but not too much.  
 Never whisper in company  
 Read no letters in company  
 Look not over one writing or reading.  
 Hum no tune in company, nor be any ways noisy  
 Walk gently  
 Stare in no one's face  
 Eat not too fast nor too slow.  
 Smell not to your meat when eating.  
 Spit not on the carpet  
 Offer not another your handkerchief  
 Take no snuff  
 Chew no tobacco  
 Withdraw on certain occasions imperceptibly  
 Hold no indelicate discourse.  
 Avoid all old tricks and habits;<sup>1</sup>

and a few more excerpts from the Letters. Letter CCXIV, "We are more than half we are by imitation,"<sup>2</sup> Letter CLXV, "Imitate then, with discernment and judgment, the real perfections of the good company into which you may get; copy their politeness, their carriage, their address, and the ease and well bred turn of their conversation; but remember that, let them shine ever so bright,

1. Galateo, pp 267 f.

2. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 302, Letter CCXIV.

their vices, if they have any, are so many spots which you would no more imitate, than you would make an artificial wart upon your face, because some very handsome man had the misfortune to have a natural one upon his; but, on the contrary, think how much handsomer he would have been without it."<sup>1</sup> Letter CCXXIV, "Let no conversation, no example, no fashion, no bon mot, no silly desire of seeming to be above, what most knaves and many fools, call prejudices, ever tempt you to avow, excuse, extenuate, or laugh at the least breach of morality; but shew upon all occasions, and take all occasions to shew, a detestation and abhorrence of it. There, though young, you ought to be strict; and there only, while young, it becomes you to be strict and severe;"<sup>2</sup> and this most admirable passage from Letter CCXIX, "I hope you are in haste to live; by living I mean living with lustre and honour to yourself, with utility to society; doing what may deserve to be written, or writing what may deserve to be read; I should wish both."<sup>3</sup>

The pastimes for a courtly gentleman were riding and tilting, playing at all weapons, shooting fairly with bow or surely with a gun, vaulting, running, leaping, wrestling, swimming, dancing, singing, playing on instruments, hawking, hunting, and any other pastime possessing exercise for war or pleasure for peace. These pastimes were considered not only for their pleasure and exercise but also as a necessity for a courtier.<sup>4</sup> Of all the accomplishments, that of horsemanship was held in highest repute.<sup>5</sup> Of the

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 194, Letter CLXY.

2. op. cit., p 323, Letter CCXXIV.

3. op. cit., p 311, Letter CCXIX.

4. The Scholemaster, p 63.

5. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 154.



indoor games, chess was the only one generally favored. Card-playing, more rarely dice, was sometimes indulged in, if used moderately and honestly, but both were usually frowned upon.<sup>1</sup> Elyot states in this connection, "Playing at cards and tables is some what more tollerable (than dice) only for as moche as therin wytte is more used and lesse truste is in fortune, all be hit therin is neither laudable study nor exercise.

"The chesse, of all games wherin is no bodily exercise, is mooste to be commended; for therin is right subtile engine, whereby the wytte is made more sharpe and remembrance quickened."<sup>2</sup> Dancing and music were favorites. Dancing was necessary for a gentleman at court. Lord Herbert of Cherbury recommended dancing in terms that suggest Chesterfield, "that when he hath occasion to stir, his motions may be comely and graceful, that he may learn to know how to come in and go out of a room where company is, how to make courtesies handsomely, accordingly to the several degrees of persons he shall encounter, how to put off or hold his hat."<sup>3</sup> Castiglione's courtier, "if he danceth in the presence of many and in a place full of people, he must keep a certain dignity, tempered notwithstanding with a handsome and slightly sweetness of gestures."<sup>4</sup>

Chesterfield believed pleasures were necessary and useful. They fashioned and formed one for the world, they taught one characters and shewed one the human heart in its unguarded minutes.<sup>5</sup>

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 159.

2. The Boke Named the Governour, p 111.

3. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 160

4. The Courtier, p 105.

5. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 143, Letter CXL.

Quite unlike the pleasures of the renaissance gentleman in that many of the latter's pleasures were to be useful as exercises for war, the pleasures of the eighteenth century were more confined to social activities. Chesterfield summarized the true pleasures of a gentleman to be "those of the table, but within the bound of moderation, good company, that is to say, people of merit; moderate play, which amuses, without any interested views; and sprightly gallant conversations with women of fashion and sense. ....

These are the real pleasures of a gentleman; which occasion neither sickness, shame, nor repentance. Whatever exceeds them becomes low vice, brutal passion, debauchery, and insanity of mind; all of which far from giving satisfaction, bring on dishonour and disgrace."<sup>1</sup> "Your evenings, I therefore allot for company, assemblies, balls, and such sort of amusements; as I look upon those to be the best schools for the manners of a gentleman; which nothing can give but use, observation, and experience."<sup>2</sup> He considered dancing an excellent exercise for teaching grace in movement, carriage, presence, and so because Stanhope so greatly needed grace, the best dancing masters were secured and Stanhope diligently was taught the art. The following extracts are strikingly similar to the ideas advanced by Lord Herbert quoted above, "Dancing teaches you to present yourself, to sit, stand, and walk, genteelly; all of which are of real importance to a man of fashion,"<sup>3</sup> and "I desire you will particularly attend to the graceful motion

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 116, Letter CXVIII.

2. op. cit., p 226, Letter CLXXXII.

3. op. cit., p 191, Letter CLXIV.

of your arms; which, with the manner of putting on your hat, and giving your hand, is all that a gentleman need attend to."<sup>1</sup> Although Chesterfield names the usual pleasures and pastimes of the eighteenth century gentleman, yet he admonishes his son to be independent in the choice of his pleasures and not let them be imposed upon him. He wants him to follow nature rather than fashion and to weigh the present enjoyment of the pleasure against the necessary consequence of it and then let his common sense determine his choice.<sup>2</sup> In brief, he says, "The pleasure of virtue, of charity, and of learning is true and lasting pleasure; with which I hope you will be well and long acquainted."<sup>3</sup>

Philip Stanhope's greatest short coming was his lack of grace. Lord Chesterfield, who was himself a model of grace and ease, was constantly distressed by his son's shyness and awkwardness. Where the sixteenth century conduct books stressed the virtues, Chesterfield emphasized the graces. The elder Stanhope realized the futility of learning and character without a pleasing, gracious personality and address. From the earliest to the last letter, he reiterates again and again, "Remember the graces!" Letter XLIV, "...whereas a gentleman, who is used to the world, comes into company with a graceful and proper assurance, speaks even to people he does not know, without embarrassment, and in a natural and easy manner. This is called usage of the world and good breeding; a most necessary and important knowledge in the intercourse of

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 101, Letter CIV.

2. op. cit., p 117, Letter CXIX.

3. op. cit., p 117 f, Letter CXIX.

life. It frequently happens that a man, with a great deal of sense, but with little usage of the world, is not so well received as one of inferior parts, but with a gentleman-like behavior."<sup>1</sup> Letter CI, "Next to character, which is founded upon solid merit, the most pleasing thing to one's self is to please, and that depends upon the manner of exerting those good qualities that form the character."<sup>2</sup> Letter CXC, "There is a certain dignity of manners absolutely necessary, to make even the most valuable character either respected or respectable."<sup>3</sup> Letter CLXV, "There I pleased to some degree by showing a desire to please, I took care never to be absent or distraight; but, on the contrary, attended to every thing that was said, done or even looked, in company. I never failed in the minutest attentions and was never journalier. These things, and not my exaremens, made me fashionable."<sup>4</sup> Letter CXC advises the son to read Cicero's Decorum. In Letter CCXXXIX, Chesterfield gives in his epigrammatic style the ideal qualities of a man of fashion, "Your great point at present at Paris.... is to become entirely a man of fashion; to be well bred without ceremony, easy without negligence, steady and intrepid with modesty, genteel without affectation, insinuating without meanness, cheerful without being noisy, frank without discretion, and secret without mysteriousness; to know the proper time and place for whatever you say or do, and to do it with an air of condition."<sup>5</sup>

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 41, Letter XLIV.

2. op. cit., p 98, Letter CI.

3. op. cit., p 243, Letter CXC.

4. op. cit., p 194 f, Letter CLXV.

5. op. cit., p 357, Letter CCXXXIX.



These qualities separately and collectively form the woof of the Letters: "Remember the graces!"<sup>1</sup> Another rule which has no rival is given to young Stanhope: "Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re" (gently in manner, strongly in deed). "I do not know any one rule so unexceptionably useful and necessary in every part of life. ... that gentleness of manners, with firmness of mind, is a short, but full description of human perfection on this side of religious and moral duties. That you may be seriously convinced of this truth, and shew it in your life and conversation, is the most sincere and ardent wish of \_\_\_\_."<sup>2</sup>

It must not be understood from the preceding paragraph that the conduct books do not treat on manners and deportment. They do and forcefully so. Notice how well Chesterfield has ingrafted their doctrines, Casa: "Agreeable manners are such as effect with delight some one of our senses; or, at least, do not shock or offend either the senses, the instincts, or the imaginations of those with whom we live and converse."<sup>3</sup> Lyly: "Ther belongeth more to a courtier than bravery, which the wise laugh at, or personage, which the chaast mark not, or wit, which the most part see not. It is sober and discret behavior, civil and gentle demeanor, that in court winneth both credit and commoditie."<sup>4</sup> Bacon: "This behaviour is as the garment of the mind, and ought to have the conditions of a garment. For first, it ought to be made in fashion; secondly, it should not be too curious or costly; thirdly,

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 194 f, Letter CLXV.

2. op. cit., p 370 f, Letter CCXLV.

3. Galates, p 154.

4. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 81.

it ought to be so framed as to best set forth any virtue of the mind, and supply and hide any deformity; and lastly and above all, it ought not to be too strait so as to confine the mind and interfere with its freedom in business and action."<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield, "In all courts you must expect to meet with connections without friendship, enmities without hatred, honour without virtue, appearances saved, and realities sacrificed; good manners with bad morals; and all vice and virtues so disguised, that whoever has only reasoned upon both would know neither when he first met them at court. It is well that you should know the map of that country, that when you come to travel in it, you may do it with greater safety."<sup>2</sup> There seems a more personal note in the Letters, presumably for the reason they are addressed to one and only one individual and suited to his needs, whereas the guide books were for any one who desired to become a courtier and are more general in their address. Yet the two are similar in spirit and purpose. Compare the two on the subject of grace. Castiglione, "....the courtier ought to accompany all his doings, gestures, demeanors, finally all his motions, with a grace, and this, methink, you put for a sauce to every thing, without the which all his other properties and good condition were little worth,"<sup>3</sup> Casa: "....we must not think it sufficient that we do any thing merely well; but we ought to make it our study to do every thing gracefully so. Now, grace is nothing more than a certain lustre, which

1. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 82.

2. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 331, Letter CCXXVIII.

3. The Courtier, p 35.

shines forth from an harmony of the parts of things, properly connected and elegantly disposed in regard to the whole; without which symmetry, indeed, what is really good may not be beautiful; and without which, even beauty itself is not graceful or even pleasing. .... thus the behaviour of men, though it really offend no one, may nevertheless be insipid, and even be distasteful, unless a man can learn that sweetness of manners; which, I apprehend, is properly called elegance and grace."<sup>1</sup> "The distinguishing quality of gentlemanly behaviour was grace; as De la Casa put it, 'It is not enough for a man, to do things that be good; but hee must also have a care, he doo them with a good grace;'"<sup>2</sup> and "the gentleman should govern his saying and doing by consideration of what his speech and action are, the persons involved, the place, the occasion, the purpose, his own age and profession; in other words he should fit both to the circumstances.

In the main business of life, in pastimes, in conversation, in gesture, walk, carriage, laugh even, he will so behave as to win for himself the approbation due him for his excellent qualities, and to give others pleasure. And he will not win the one unless he perform in the company and presence of those able to estimate his worth justly, or give the other unless to his good qualities 'a gentle and loving behavior.' Grace has then two aspects: gracefulness; graciousness, tact, pleasantness in social converse."<sup>3</sup> Now Chesterfield, "Graces should appear in every look, in every action; in your address, and even in your dress, if you would either

1. Galateo, p 160 f.

2. Doctrine of English Gentleman, p 83 f.

3. op. cit., p 83 f.

please or rise in the world."<sup>1</sup> Compare Cass with Chesterfield in the matter of ceremonies. "We ought, therefore, in regard to ceremony, as a good master taylor does in cutting out a suit of cloathes; which ought to sit rather full and easy, than too tight upon the body; yet not so as that a pair of breeches should hang like a sack, or coat like a cloak about one. Thus, if you are rather more liberal in this respect than is absolutely necessary, especially towards your inferiors, you will be called a very clever civil gentleman; and if you behave in the same manner towards your superiors, as every gentleman ought to do, you will be esteemed a well-bred man; but if one overacts the part, and is too profuse in his civilities, every one will condemn him as a vain and foppish fellow; or perhaps, as something worse; as a designing knave, a parasite, or a flatterer; than which vice there is nothing more detestable, or that can more disgrace a gentleman or a man of honour."<sup>2</sup> "That politeness which I mentioned, my dear child, in my former letters, regards only your equals, and your superiors. There is also a certain politeness due to your inferiors, of a different kind, 'Tis true; but whoever is without it is without good nature. We do not need to compliment those beneath us nor to talk of their doing us the honor etc., but we ought to treat them with benevolence and mildness. We are all of the same species, and no distinction whatever is between us, except that which arises from fortune. For

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 248, Letter CXG;  
 2. Galates, p 90 ff.



example, your footman and Lisette would be your equals were they as rich as you. Being poor, they are obliged to serve you; therefore, you must not add to their misfortune by insulting or by ill treating them. If your situation is preferable to theirs, be thankful to God, without either despising them, or being vain of your better fortune. You must, therefore, treat all your inferiors with affability and good manners, and not speak to them in a surly tone, nor with harsh expression, as if they were of a different species. A good heart never reminds people of their misfortunes, but endeavors to alleviate, or if possible, to make them forget it. I am persuaded you will always act in that manner, otherwise I should not love you as much as I do."<sup>1</sup> Letter CCLXXXIV, "The trade of a courtier is as much a trade as that of a shoemaker; and he who applies himself the most, will work the best; the only difficulty is to distinguish between the right and proper qualifications and their kindred faults; for there is but a line between every perfection and its neighboring imperfection. As, for example, you must be extremely well-bred and polite, but without the troublesome forms and stiffness of ceremony. You must be frank, but without indiscretion, and close, without being costive. You must keep up dignity of character, without the least pride of birth or rank. You must be gay within all the bounds of decency and respect; and grave without the affection of wisdom, which does not become the age of twenty. You must be essentially secret, without being dark and mysterious. You must be firm and

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, P 33, Letter XXXVI.

even bold, but with great seeming modesty."<sup>1</sup> Letter CL, "A mere courtier; without parts or knowledge, is the most frivolous and contemptible of all beings; as, on the other hand, a man of parts and knowledge who acquires the easy and noble manners of a court is the most perfect."<sup>2</sup> Concerning good breeding, Casa offers several hints:

"Pass no joke with a sting.

Avoid being thought a punster.

Keep free from mimicry.

Never pride yourself on being a wag.

Be moderate in salutations.

Be not envious.

Be not passively complaisant.

Shew no hastiness of temper.

Be mild to your servants.

Keep up outward appearances.

Be easy in carriage.

Listen when spoken to.

Vary your address.

Behave well at table.

Attend to the women.

Kiss not the ladies."<sup>3</sup>

Chesterfield's admonitions are couched in a more general and elegant style: "Know then, that as learning, honor, and virtue

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 456, Letter CCLXXXIV.

2. op. cit., p 158, Letter CL.

3. Galateo, p 269.

are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind, politeness and good-breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life. Great talents, such as honor, virtue, learning, and parts, are above the generality of the world; who nether possess them themselves, nor judge of them rightly in others; but all people are judges of the lesser talents such as civility, affability, and an obliging agreeable address and manner; because they feel the good effects of them, as making society easy and pleasing. Good-sense, must in many cases, determine good-breeding....the perfection of good-breeding is, to be civil with ease and in a gentleman-like manner."<sup>1</sup>

There was, in young Stanhope, another grievous fault which provoked much advice and admonition from Chesterfield. That was his manner of speech; this was hesitant and indistinct. In one letter he writes, "One must be extremely exact, clear, and perspicuous, in everything one says, otherwise, instead of entertaining, or informing others, one only tries and puzzles them. The voice and manner of speaking, too, are not to be neglected;"<sup>2</sup> and in his next letter he continues the subject, "Every man, if he please, may choose good words instead of bad ones, may speak properly instead of improperly, may be clear and perspicuous in his recitals, instead of dark and muddy; may have grace instead of awkwardness in his motions and gestures; and in short may be

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 63 f, Letter LXIX.

2. op. cit., p 70 ff, Letter LXXV and LXXVI.

a very agreeable, instead of a very disagreeable speaker, if he will take care and pains." He devotes entire letters on one phase of speech; for example, Letter CCXXIX treats of enunciation.<sup>1</sup> "Words," he writes in Letter CCII, "which are the dress of thoughts, deserve surely more care than clothes, which are only the dress of the person, and which, however, ought to have their share of attention."<sup>2</sup> In this anxiety for beauty and clearness of speech, Chesterfield reflects Castiglione who would have his Courtier possess as requisite for his calling, "a good voice, not too subtle or soft, as in a woman, nor yet so boisterous and rough, as in one of the country, but shrill, clear, sweet, and well framed with a prompt pronunciation and with fit manners and gestures-- which consist in certain motions of all the body, not affected nor forced, but tempered with a mannerly countenance."<sup>3</sup> Casa also expressed similar essentials for the speech of a well-bred man, "First, by never discoursing upon law, frivolous, dirty, or immodest subjects. Secondly, by making choice of such words in your own language as are clear, proper, well-sounding, and such as have usually a good meaning annexed to them, and do not suggest to the imagination the idea of any thing base, filthy, or indecent. Thirdly, by ranging your words in an elegant order, so that they may not appear confused and jumbled together at random, nor yet by too labouring an exactness, forced into certain regular feet and measures. Further, by taking care to pronounce carefully and

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 332, Letter CCXXIX.

2. op. cit., p 496, Letter CCII.

3. The Courtier, p 52.



distinctly, what you have to say, and not join together things entirely different and dissimilar. Lastly, if you pronounce each letter and syllable with a proper sweetness, neither stifling your words between your teeth, as if you were chewing them, or huddling them together as if you were swallowing them. By carefully attending to these precepts then, and a few more of this kind, others will hear you gladly and with pleasure, and you yourself will obtain with applause that degree of dignity which becomes a well-bred man and gentleman."<sup>1</sup>

In brief Chesterfield wished his son to attain the same goal which the renaissance idealist wished the Courtier, that is perfection. "The disposition of the best, the words of the wisest the actions of the noblest, and the carriage of the fairest."<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son is strikingly similar to the "Conduct Books" of the sixteenth century. The Letters, although in short installments, taken as a whole, have a well organized aim, purpose, and plan. They are similar in these respects to the handbooks which seek gradually to guide the Elizabethan youth from his early years to his maturity. Had the son, young Philip Stanhope, followed successfully his father's advice, he would have had the grace, the manners, the accomplishments, the education, and the character that would have done justice to any "pensioner gentleman" of the sixteenth century or to the highest ideal of Lord Chesterfield, the best mannered gentleman of his time.

1. Galateo, p 137.

2. Inedited Tracts, The Court and Country, p 208.

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